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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 505. FOR WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

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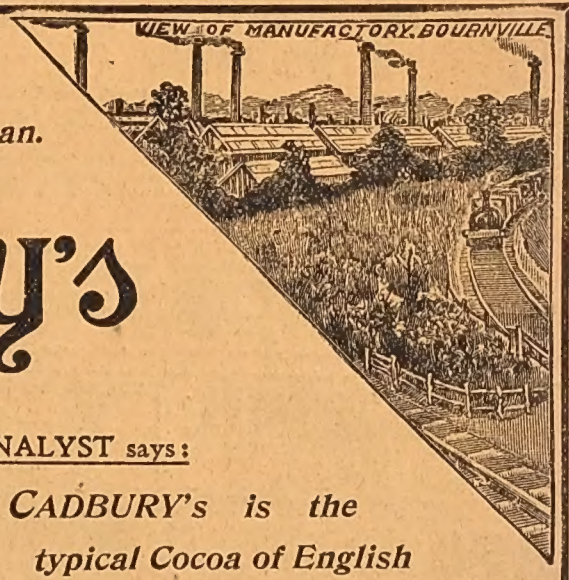

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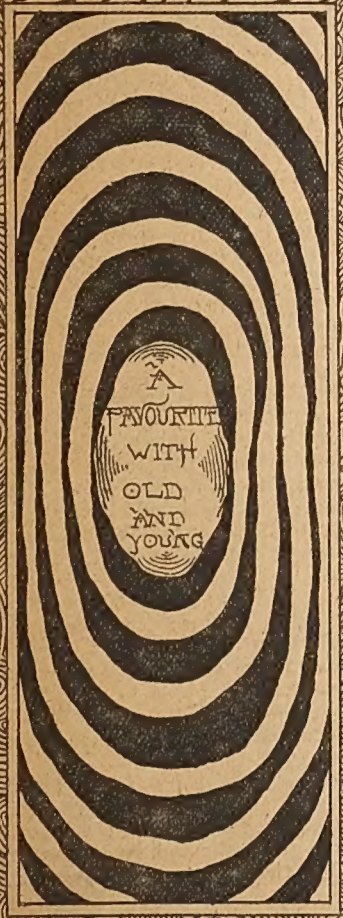
No. 505. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending September 3rd, 1898.



UNTOLD TALES OF THE INDIAN MUTINY.

By H. HUNTER.

V.—AN UNREHEARSED TRAGEDY.

MEERUT—Friday evening, May the 8th, 1857, Lieutenant Harvey, of the 11th Regiment of Native Infantry, was standing in the veranda of his capacious bungalow reading a letter. His buggy was at the door.

He was descending the steps leading from the house when a messenger approaching had handed him a document.

It was inclosed in a long blue official-looking envelope, and the Lieutenant had taken it with all ill grace, a clouded brow, and a muttered expletive.

He was impatient to shake off the dust of the cantonment from his feet for a while—to forget in the dewy lips and laughing eyes, which would be sure to greet him in the pleasant bower whither he was bound, all the work and worry of the week; the troubles past, the fears present, the doubts of what might be to come.

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There had been a good deal of feeling exhibited in the station during the week.

The occasion for it had been the action of Carmichael Smyth, who commanded the 3rd Native Cavalry, in ordering a parade of his men. Many of the European officers had handled him without gloves at the mess tables.

Some had openly denounced him before mixed company at the Commissioner's.

"He was a hard man," said they; "harsh in manner, cold, unsympathetic, and uncharitable."

A few had not scrupled to abuse him in the Lines.

The General had gone about lamenting that the Colonel should have forced a crisis and shown how little confidence he had in his men.

There was no doubt that Smyth had made himself the most unpopular man in the station.

There was an uncomfortable feeling in the bungalows of the Europeans that there might possibly be an interruption to the social gaieties, the pleasures and amenities of the great military cantonment to the north of Delhi.

Lieutenant Harvey tore open the envelope in the expectation of finding some unwelcome duty interposing itself between him and his weekly visit to Guln reganj.

The general Court-martial on the eighty-five troopers of the 3rd Cavalry who had refused to take the new cartridge had found the men guilty, and a punishment parade of all arms had been ordered at daybreak on Saturday, May the 9th. This, of itself, promised to entail upon Lieutenant Harvey no inconsiderable hardship in the shape of a double journey with only a few hours between; since he would have to come in to attend the parade; and drive out to the village again in the evening, if he wished to spend Sunday in the scented garden, where lived, with her own people, Zinat, the native girl, whose youthful grace and maiden beauty had captured the Lieutenant's too easily surrendered heart.

"Another croak from the croakers," he ejaculated mentally as he extracted a neatly folded sheet of Regimental note from the depths of the big envelope. Without doubt the communication had something to do with the wretched piece of business for which Colonel Smyth was getting all the blame.

The personal inconvenience which he was likely to suffer from the "stupidity" of the cavalry colonel was the chief thing uppermost in Lieutenant Harvey's mind at the moment.

"No," said he, fairly surprised, when at last the letter was opened, and disclosed the familiar script of an officer in the 60th Rifles, who acted as stage manager to the Military Theatre, "from Taylor. Bah Jove!

'Final rehearsal,'" he read; "'full dress—6.30 a.m., Monday. Mrs. Craigie and Miss Chambers had been working like niggers to get the dresses finished for the women's parts. They have just sent me word that I may depend on having them to-morrow, before tiffin.

"'We shall have a swell house on Monday night, old man.

"'Commissioner Fraser, I hear, is bringing over a party from Delhi. Little Bobbie Brown, of the 20th, has been practising the dying fall till he's that sore he can hardly move. He does it beautifully now.

"'Mrs. Scandalmonger whispered that a certain handsome Lieutenant in the 11th was safe to be off to the dove cot early to-morrow, so I'm sending this to-day by Gholam Singh. You must make one of us at dinner to-morrow night, old chap. No refusals accepted. Miss C. will be your left hand supporter.

"'Your mare can take you out to the Peri under thirty minutes; and 'detained at quarters' is always an available excuse.

"'Herein fail not at your peril.

"'Beastly nuisance this P.P. at four in the morning, isn't it? Can't we work a 'gag' or two for the benefit of the disturber of the Pax Britannica?'"

"Humph!" muttered Harvey, who had a vivid recollection of the dismal wailings of Colonel Smyth after his return from the great fair at Hardwar, "Cassandra in boots and breeches, eh? Doing his best to bring his own prophecies to pass, of course. Yes, bah Jove! I have it—clean and classical. A line from the knights of Aristophanes; though I daresay the old man would appreciate it better if it was less Greek and more Gaelic."

Lieutenant Harvey chuckled, scribbled a few words on the flysheet of the letter, tore it off, folded it, wrote Captain Taylor's name in the corner, and gave it to the messenger who had been squatting on his hams at the bottom of the steps, impassive as a bronze statue; but silently studying every line and feature of the Lieutenant's face as he rapidly scanned the contents of the Captain's missive.

Gholam Singh placed the letter in his turban salaamed and departed. Lieutenant Harvey climbed into his buggy, whipped up his mare, and driving rapidly past the Sipáhi Cantonment huts, past the gardens and trees of the compounds, and along the great Mall which divided the station into native and European, finally gained the dusty road which led through hamlet and village down to the Calcutta Gate of the Imperial City, forty miles away.

Harvey however, had only a drive of five miles in front of him! and before he had gone two, the rapid motion and the grateful breeze had dispelled the blue devils which had oppressed him on starting and given him a new outlook all round.

He saw nothing in the picture to excite suspicion; heard nothing dropped that would excuse the cry of "wolf."

There was nothing to be seen or heard, but the usual sights and sounds of an Indian landscape—the watchman at the village gate, the crowd at the well, the naked mendicant by the road, the temple in the grove, the story-teller under the banyan, the juggler on the green.

Rural India was Happy Arcadia; and after this little breeze which Smyth had whistled up had blown over, the atmosphere might perhaps be all the better for the hurly-burly.

The Lieutenant flicked off the flies which were tor-

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menting the mare's neck and shoulders and let his thoughts wander.

He saw himself on the stage of the Garrison Theatre playing lover to Miss Chambers, the sister of his Adjutant.

The girl had only come out to India quite recently, having been brought over by her brother as companion to his newly married wife.

She was a tall, blonde beauty, with a marvellous complexion, and an abundance of animal spirits which made her the adored of the men and the envied of the women. The pitiless sun had not yet begun to lay its fiery finger on her youthful bloom and rosy freshness.

A good pianist, a better singer, she was much sought after by the hostesses of the great military station in Upper India, where her brother, Captain Chambers, was quartered. Fond of theatricals, Miss Chambers made a very clever actress; and having already achieved distinguished success in tragedy, had been cast for the principle female *rôle* in the piece that was down for performance on Monday night.

Lieutenant Harvey rather thought that he should enjoy the part assigned to him; for though the sweet English girl in her stage character had to inform him of her inability to return his affection, he would have opportunities such as many fellows he knew would gladly give a year's seniority to possess.

He fell a-musing, and found himself wondering how many times he had rehearsed the piece without once grasping the fact that the mimic tragedy of the stage would perhaps really require but a look, a gesture, a movement to convert it into the sordid tragedy of the street.

Thinking thus, his hand went to his pocket. When he drew it forth he had a curiously folded scrap of paper between his fingers. He looked at it for a moment with a queer dimming of the eye, passed the reins over to the native groom who was riding on the shaft, and slowly unfolded the small thin sheet he had abstracted from the pocket of his jacket.

"I firmly believe that girl would lay down her life for me," he murmured under his breath.

He gazed at the paper with eager attention for a long minute. It was covered in one corner with native characters, but the flowing Persian was as easily decipherable by Lieutenant Harvey as if it had been the most prosaic English.

"Lord of my life," it ran, "my heart panteth after thee, and refuseth to be satisfied until my eyes shall behold thee.

"Strange tidings have been brought hither. Come to me, my beloved, that I may satisfy myself with thy presence. Do not tarry but come swiftly, for one shall be taken and another shall be left.

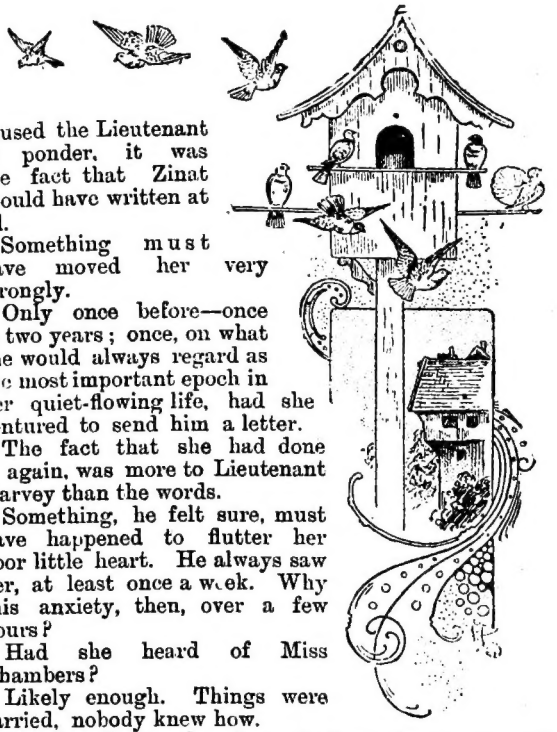
"Folly is at the finger ends of fools.

"They will dig up the house floors and level the cities.

"Come, thou desire of my heart; my soul will not fail to speak, and the daughters of music, the women who sit in the Meena Bazaar, shall be brought low."

The letter had been brought to Meerut by a dâk runner, who had delivered it before noon, saying that he was to take back an answer.

The exuberance and floridity of the language were the mere commonplaces of the Orient. They meant much or little, according to the speaker and the circumstances of the moment. It was not the phrasing which



caused the Lieutenant to ponder, it was the fact that Zinat should have written at all.

Something must have moved her very strongly.

Only once before—once in two years; once, on what she would always regard as the most important epoch in her quiet-flowing life, had she ventured to send him a letter.

The fact that she had done it again, was more to Lieutenant Harvey than the words.

Something, he felt sure, must have happened to flutter her poor little heart. He always saw her, at least once a week. Why this anxiety, then, over a few hours?

Had she heard of Miss Chambers?

Likely enough. Things were carried, nobody knew how.

By the silent, salaaming, shadowy figures we call servants probably. Walls had eyes as well as ears in India. Night and day one was under observation by the natives. Dumb cattle with human passions.

The women in the harems were always well posted in all that went on outside. Yes, poor little Zinat was jealous of the *memsahib*; and now Taylor's letter would force him to inflict upon her still further pain.

He would certainly have to tell her that he couldn't possibly come over again till after gunfire on Sunday morning.

Two faces peered up at him out of the ghostly Indian twilight—one, a light golden brown with fathomless dark eyes; the other, a creamy white with a rose flush under the skin, and eyes of heavenly blue.

"Poor little girl," he said aloud. "I believe she'd die for me. But I wish—I wish to-night I'd never seen her."

He folded up the letter carefully, replaced it in his pocket, took the reins from the groom, struck the mare a quite unnecessary blow between the ears, and seven minutes later was at the end of his journey.

II.

MEERUT—Saturday night. Twenty-four hours after Lieutenant Harvey handed to Gholam Singh his reply to Captain Taylor's epistle.

The eighty-five troopers who had been stripped of their uniforms in the morning, and, fettered and shackled, had been marched out of the cantonment to the gaol, were safe under lock and key, in the great Civil Prison, two miles away.

In the European quarters dinner parties were in full swing.

Commissioner Greathed was dining with Colonel

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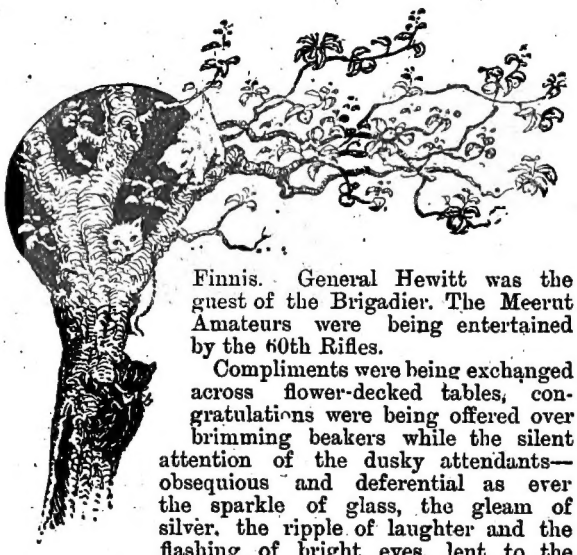

Finnis. General Hewitt was the guest of the Brigadier. The Meerut Amateurs were being entertained by the 60th Rifles.

Compliments were being exchanged across flower-decked tables, congratulations were being offered over brimming beakers while the silent attention of the dusky attendants—obsequious and deferential as ever the sparkle of glass, the gleam of silver, the ripple of laughter and the flashing of bright eyes, lent to the scene a sense of security as delusive as it was deadly.

Nothing had happened, nothing would happen.

To-day was the same as yesterday.

To-morrow would be a copy of to-day. It was "well over"; and now things, of course, would go on as usual.

The painful incidents of the punishment parade were already forgotten.

But across the deep nullah which cut the station in two, there was shame, sorrow, indignation, and resentment. The memory of that mournful morning had been burnt into the brain of every native in the Company's service by the stinging taunts and bitter gibes of the women in the bazaars.

On one side of the ditch, light and laughter; on the other, darkness and despair.

The native city was alive with rumour. The native lines were sullen with discontent. The emissaries of sedition had done their work well. They had secured the services of the women, and the men were meditating revenge.

"Bismillah!" growled Hoosein Duffadar, of the 3rd Cavalry, throwing himself on the bare ground, "that I should live to be chased and hooted by a slip of a thing out of the Chandni Chowk at Delhi."

He had gone into the city in the evening, but the story of the morning was all over the bazaars, and the cavalrymen had returned to brood and brawl in the Lines.

"Didst hear the greeting they gave us at the Gujar-Mahál?" asked a voice out of the darkness, and immediately began to hum a line from a vile gutter song.

"*Khamoosh!*" shouted the Jemadar of No. 4 troop, who was on his way to a muster of Cavalry non-coms.

"Be silent! Protection of God! Have you no respect for your beard then; or hasn't it grown yet?"

"Sure, the women, Jemadar," replied the man, "have not left a rag amongst the regiment. The moolahs have stirred up the bazaars, and they who look out of the windows make mock of us, while the eighty-five sit behind stone walls."

"See here," said a tall *sowar*, holding forth his hand in which lay two tiny circlets of shining metal, "Azee would not show me her face, but she sent me her anklets. 'Wear them,' she said, 'till you've proved your manhood by striking off the ornaments which the Feringhees have fastened on the ankles of your brethren.'"

"Inshalla! What say you, *sowars* of the 3rd? Are we who wear these," striking his sabre and clinking his spurs, "to be flouted in the bazaars and not have a word to fling back?"

"Nurfiz," put in the man whose singing had been cut short by the Jemadar, "and the fair ones who lodge in the Tumbi Bazaar, flung their *Burkas** over the men of Number Two troop, bidding them carry them back with them to hide in, when the Feringhees shall have got ready the two thousand bracelets which the smiths are busy making."

"*Alla Ke Qoodrut!*" exclaimed Hoosein savagely, starting up and stamping his spurred heel. "Coward, I am not; and I go no more to the bazaar till the eighty-five are brought back. The women are right. We are no men to let them stay in prison while the Feringhees are forging fetters for the rest."

"Hoosein has spoken," said a fresh voice. "To-morrow the Sahibs go to pray and sing in their temple. It will be a good time, Duffadar."

* * * * *

"It's all rot, you know, Jemmy. Moonshine and water, my dear fellow, moonshine and water. The old woman's been gadding about the bazaars, picking up the gossip of the gutter, and frightening the girl with her silly twaddle. The tales that woman has pitched are really past joking.

"The poor little thing's been just stuffed full of lies. Fancied I was to be set up as a mark for the men to shoot at.

"Sent for me on purpose to show me a hole in the wall—a secret hiding-place where she would conceal me from the *budmashis*.

"I gave old mother Fatmah the rough side of my tongue and a pretty big piece of my mind.

"There's nothing moving outside, old man. The niggers are as quiet as lambs and as scared as chickens.

"I didn't meet with a single experience, going out or coming in unless it be one to have seen the strange mollah who was turned out of the Lines and took refuge in the city.

"I saw him preaching to a small crowd on the outskirts this morning as I came in. You can never tell when these people will be asleep.

"The flock scattered, and the shepherd spat on the ground as I drove past. It's time those beggars were taken down a peg."

"Well, I'm glad we've got it over, anyhow. I was afraid there was going to be a row when I saw the chaps on parade. And I feel half sorry, you know, for those poor devils in 'chokee.' The blame isn't all theirs. Smyth's landed us in a fine mess."

The speakers were Lieutenant Harvey and Captain Taylor, who were enjoying a quiet smoke in the garden, while the band was taking a rest before tuning up for dance music.

"Would have spoilt Monday night's 'bill,' I guess, if we'd had any trouble this morning, Jemmy."

"Smashed up the whole show, Charlie, lock, stock and barrel. In that case, our little company would have had to play their part in an unrehearsed tragedy."

---

*A long thick veil which completely covers the figure.

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"H'm!—ain't this getting rather dismal, Captain? Suppose we join the ladies."

* * * * *

"Alla, illa, llah! There is no God but God, and there is no fighting against Fate The girl has gone," muttered old Fatmah, gazing helplessly round the empty room.

"In the night-time, wrapped in the veil of darkness she hath fled.

"The sahib will be killed and the money will stop, and Fatmah will have to go back to Delhi and find a new master—for the sahiblogues at Meerut will be all sent to Jehannum.

"Narfiz hath heard it from the mollah, who was sent by the Moulvie of Faizabad to preach the holy war.

"'The old times,' said she, 'are to come again, and the chief women are to have new bangles, bell bangles of silver, and rings, finger rings, and nose rings of gold.'

But I am too old." crooned Fatmah, "too old, and Zinat has gone. Poor fool," she murmured softly. "God keep us all! The girl gave me no peace. I had to tell the little one that the men were going out to the gaol while the sahibs were at prayers, that the sahibs would be killed and their houses burnt. Why did she send me to the bazaar if I wasn't to tell?

"Then, she would have it, poor fool, there was the news that Gholam Singh brought about the tall *mem-sahib*.

"Bismillah! yonder's her writing-box. Plague take it! that she was ever taught to write.

"Mischief, mischief is all that can come of making women wiser than the Prophet permits."

She sank on the floor amid the soft folds of her draperies, her head aside, her chin resting in the hollow of her hand.

She was listening.

Through the lattice of the window came a glint of saffron coloured light which told that the dawn was breaking.

From the native city three miles away came a low, confused murmur, which as it rose and swelled, the woman leant her ear to catch.

The native population was astir.

"Alla hafiz! May God protect you, my Pearl of Pearls," murmured the listener, thinking of the "little one" who had insisted on hearing all the news, including the gossip which Gholam Singh carried from the European quarter. 'Nobody ever would die if it wasn't the will of God."

* * * * *

Zinat, divided between love and jealousy; assailed by doubt and urged by fear, had gone to the Native Lines intending to warn her English lover of coming danger. But the Lieutenant was dining in the European quarter at the other end of the cantonment.

It was the first time the girl had ever been in the Lines; but, having no one she could trust, and realising the magnitude of the danger from the reports of old Fatmah, whom she sent daily to the bazaars; she had written a few words, wrapped herself in a *burka*, and slipped out, intending to give Harvey the letter and return at once to the house.

Learning, however, that he was with the sahibs in the North Camp, she determined to follow him thither—perhaps she would see the tall fair *mem*, about whom Gholam Singh had talked with old Fatmah. It was a long way round, she hardly knew how to find her way in the dark. Old Fatmah's tales have made her very miserable. Her world seemed toppling about her ears. Everything had suddenly changed its aspect for her. She was afraid of every white face but one.

Jealousy gnawing at her heart, love animating her soul, desperation whispering in her ear, she set out for the British Lines.

"What was that? It came from behind the castor oil trees and has gone into that bamboo clump."

The voice was feminine and the tone betrayed alarm.

Miss Chambers had found the atmosphere within doors oppressive, and Lieutenant Harvey had proposed a stroll in the garden.

They were sauntering idly along the winding paths under the peaceful light of the tropic stars. The band had just struck up the first bars of "God save the Queen."

"Didn't you see it?" she asked, laying her hand upon her companion's arm.

"I'm afraid my attention was wholly occupied elsewhere," he said, casting a look full of admiration upon the beautiful face whose pretty smile had suddenly given place to a look of gravity. "What was it like?"

"Oh! I don't know—something white. It came out of the castor oil trees. I believe now, I saw it some minutes ago—on the other path."

"The breeze stirring the leaves often gives one the idea of a turban amongst the castor oil trees. It's been noticed by lots of people."

"Oh! but I saw it before. Yes, I'm sure I saw it before; and it wasn't a turban. It was—somebody's been watching us," she said abruptly. "I have a distinct impression that somebody's been watching us, and it makes me—uncomfortable."

He laughed sceptically. "Nothing to be alarmed at, my dear Miss Chambers. Some native gardener, probably. These people are about at all hours, you know; and flit from pillar to post like shee ed ghosts.

"One gets used to it after a while. Hark! Confound their politics. Frustrate their knavish tricks. That sounds all right, doesn't it? Shall I take you in now—Nellie?"

Zinat meanwhile, having fled from the castor oil trees on the approach of Harvey and his companion, was flying she knew not whither—anywhere, anywhere, so it be away from the fair white faces of the *mem-sahibs*.

"I hate them, oh! I *hate* them." she cried; and, flinging herself face downwards in the long grass, the undelivered letter clutched close against her breast, she sobbed bitterly—so bitterly that oblivious of aught save the pain at her heart, she never felt the pin prick inflicted by that cold slimy thing which, gliding swiftly across her feet disappeared amongst the yellow blades of the tiger grass.

III.

Monday—mid-day May the 11th, 1857, round the doors of the Garrison Theatre at Meerut a small knot of men had gathered. They were conversing in low tones and subdued whispers. The grave looks they exchanged and the unmistakable air of depression which hung over the group, told all too clearly of calamity and disaster. Something untoward had happened.

The doors of the theatre had been open since before six o'clock. Men had been continually passing in and out. Frequently they were bearing a burden which

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they carried in mournful silence and handled with reverent care.

By mid-day, the boards of the pretty house, which was to have witnessed a mimic tragedy that very evening, were occupied by a silent company, a company who had been called upon without notice to play their part in the opening scene of the Great Unrehearsed Tragedy on which the curtain went up on the morning of the previous day, Sunday, May 10th.

Over a dozen mangled and mutilated bodies lay upon the stage; amongst them that of Mrs. Chambers, wife of the adjutant of the 11th Sepoys.

At 6 p.m. on Sunday, Major Whish had driven into Brigadier Wilson's compound with the news that the native troops were in mutiny.

The cavalrymen had broken into the gaol, liberated the military prisoners, and brought them back to the lines. Their action had stopped there, but the infantry was in open revolt.

Alas! while Brigadier Wilson was receiving the report of Major Whish, Colonel Finnis of the 11th was falling from his horse riddled with the bullets of the 20th.

In that great struggling cantonment, broken up into blocks and sections, and covering an area five miles in circumference, it was difficult to know what was passing on the other side of the wide mall which lay between the European barracks and the native lines. The native city itself, lay still further to the south and from every lane and every alley in that crowded area men were then pouring.

Butchers, porters, watercarriers, cutlers, all scenting plunder, and each ready for slaughter.

The *budmashis* of the bazaars, finding the gaol open, had released the convicts, and 800 cut-throats went forward with the rest, to help in the fiendish work which the young May moon was soon to look down upon.

The mutineers after throwing off their allegiance and shooting whatever officers happened to come in their way, had started in hot haste for Delhi. Most of the burning, the butchering, and the plundering of that memorable Sunday night was the work of the Hindoo and Mohammedan mob from the bazaars.

The men at the door of the Theatre moved aside as another mournful little procession passed in. They looked in dumb surprise at the motionless white figure which the bearers were carrying.

"Yes," said the officer who accompanied them, "she's a native. They picked her up this morning between the 60th Mess-house and the Dragoon Barracks."

"What was she doing over there?" queried one.

"Coming to warn us for a certainty," replied the officer, "and got bitten by a cobra. "Anybody seen Harvey? I've a letter for him."

"You'll find him inside, Taylor," from several.

"He went in ten minutes ago with poor Chambers," volunteered the man who had asked the question about the girl. "Lucky for Miss Chambers that she was with Mrs. Cragie when the mob broke into the Captain's bungalow. He's taking it badly poor fellow."

Captain Taylor passed on, leaving the group still lingering at the door.

They put the native girl in a corner by herself; and, Captain Taylor, drawing Lieutenant Harvey aside whispered a few words in his ear.

Harvey stooped down, and peered under the veil which concealed the features of the silent one. When he rose his eyes were wet with tears.

The Captain handed him a letter. "It fell out of her bosom when we turned her over," he said, looking down sorrowfully at the dead girl.

"She died for me, Jemmy," murmured the Lieutenant, with a break in his voice, as he caught the full meaning of the queer Persian characters. "If I'd only had this on Saturday night. . . . My God," he broke out vehemently, gazing with passionate burning eyes upon the white robed figure at his feet, as the remembrance of something Miss Chambers had said in the Mess garden came back to him with terrible new distinctness.

"Jemmy!" his eyes wandered over the shrouded forms lying there so still and quiet in the dusky light of the silent stage. "I feel very like a murderer," he gasped.

His mouth was at the other man's ear, and he continued to speak for some minutes:

"You've nothing to blame yourself for in this matter, old man," said the Captain, when the Lieutenant had finished speaking. "It's a woman's way, whatever be the colour of her skin. The little one was jealous poor thing. If it hadn't been for that 'damned vermin' she'd have returned when the fit was over. But I've just heard that B—— had a wire from Delhi in the evening which ought to have put us on the *qui vive*, but it came at an awkward moment and he slipped it into his mess jacket—and, straightway forgot all about it."

"I'd shoot myself if I were he," exclaimed Harvey, with savage earnestness. "Let's get outside, Taylor, the air in here is stifling. I shall never enter a theatre again without thinking of the Great Unrehearsed Tragedy at Meerut."

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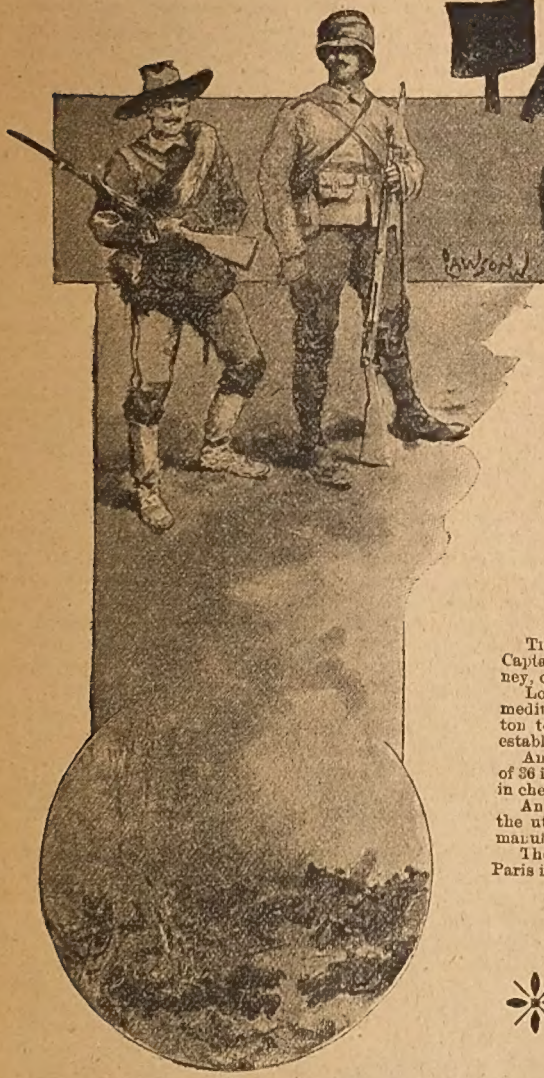
Begin this Magnificent Serial To-day.



THE FINAL WAR

BY

LOUIS TRACY.

Author of "The Shadow Hand," "An American Emperor," "The Lost Provinces," etc.

SUMMARY.

Time 1898. Irene, daughter of Lord Eskdale, Ambassador at Paris, is engaged to Captain Edward Harington, Lord Eskdale's military *attaché*, and Lieutenant Rodney, of H.M.S. *Magnificent*, to Harington's sister, Ethel.

Lord Eskdale has very good reasons to believe that France and Germany are meditating an immediate invasion of England. He, therefore, dispatches Harington to London to warn the Premier, and Rodney to warn the British admiral established in the Mediterranean.

An attempt to land at Worthing is made by a combined French and German fleet of 36 ironclads, 40 troopships, and 100 smaller boats. The local volunteers hold them in check till the regulars arrive from London.

An inventor secures an audience with the Prince of Wales and demonstrates to him the utility of a new weapon, with the result that steps are immediately taken to manufacture an enormous number of them.

The *Hornet*, a torpedo boat, commanded by Rodney, blows up the Suez Canal. Paris is in a state of fermentation owing to the repulse of the Allied fleet.

CHAPTER IX.

IMPREGNABLE GIBRALTAR.

When Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour surveyed his fleet under the lee of the Rock, he felt that few British naval commanders had ever looked upon so goodly a company.

His flag was hoisted on board the *Ramillies*, and that of his second in command, Rear-Admiral Compton E. Domvile, on the *Trafalgar*. The other first-class battleships in the roads were the *Anson*, *Barfleur*, *Camperdown*, *Collingwood*, *Hood*, *Howe*, *Nile*, and *Rodney*. The torpedo-ram *Polyphemus*, the cruisers *Hawke*, *Arethusa*, *Cambrian*, *Fearless*, *Scout*, and *Sybille*, and the gunboats *Ardent*, *Erial*, *Hebe*, and *Skipjack*, were valuable additions to the British fighting force.

In the path of any vessels coming from Toulon, the *Cockatrice* and *Surprise*, fast dispatch vessels, kept watch and ward some sixty to seventy miles away.

Some French ships of war approached the Straits a few hours after the Mediterranean fleet had reached Gibraltar. They appeared vastly surprised to find such an array of heavy metal in their way. Without any effort to try conclusions with the British ships, they promptly executed a *volte-face*.

It was the general opinion on the Rock that these vessels constituted a small expedition, with some specific purpose in view, which was forestalled by the unexpected departure of the British fleet from Malta. As, in any case, the enemy could hardly expect the English to remain quietly anchored at Valleta, it was further argued that a very strong combined fleet must be massed near Toulon, and its advent might be speedily looked for.

Both of these surmises proved to be correct, and subsequent inquiry showed that the expeditionary force that had been frightened off was intended for operations in Canadian waters.

On Sunday afternoon the *Seahorse*—Commander Tully, having successfully run the gauntlet of the Bay—brought definite intelligence of the fight at Worthing. Great was the jubilation throughout the fleet, and greater still when the battleships *Australia*, *Alexandra*, *Colossus*, and *Benbow* arrived on Tuesday to reinforce the Mediterranean Squadron, conveying newspapers and letters detailing the effect of the

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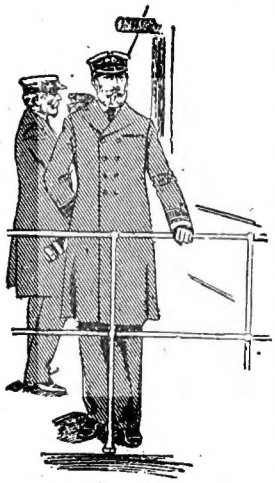
repulse and the national preparations for a gigantic war.

But if hesitation and doubt prevailed at Paris and Berlin, these fearsome qualities were absent from the hearts of the French and German admirals who commanded the combined squadrons at Toulon.

Having long foreseen the necessity of effectually disabling the strong force of Great Britain in the inland sea, they had assembled eighteen fine battleships wherewith to smother the ten English vessels of similar calibre which formed the fighting-line of the Mediterranean fleet.



Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour.

Owing to the threatened bankruptcy of Italy, that country had been compelled to sell nearly one-third of her navy to Germany at the commencement of the year, whilst wholesale expenditure on the part of the allied Powers had already given them a considerable preponderance in armour-clads and first-class cruisers over the naval forces of England.

No fewer than twenty-one of the latter type of useful warship and fourteen torpedo gunboats were with the heavier vessels.

Against such odds it would seem, theoretically, that the British fleet, even when strengthened by four additional battleships, had no chance, as it must not be forgotten that surprise on either side was out of the question—and surprise was the prime factor in the success of Lord Charles Beresford's attack at Worthing.

When, therefore, early on Wednesday morning, long before the sun had cast the shadow of the Rock over the Bay towards Algeciras, the *Surprise* and *Cockatrice* steamed in to announce that a fleet of the dimensions just described was treading fast upon their heels, there is little wonder that Sir Michael Seymour's hurried conference with Rear-Admiral Domvile and the captain of ships was grave and serious. The problem before them was perplexing enough.

The Admiral's whole thought was given towards the best plan for forcing the enemy under the guns of the Rock, which command, it must be explained, the Bay, and the tongue of land connecting the peninsula with Spain, and not the Straits themselves, which are some fourteen miles wide at that point.

"I propose, gentlemen," said the Admiral, "to form the fighting line of battleships in a crescent, concave towards the enemy. The *Ramillies* will take the right of the line, and the *Trafalgar* the left, and ships will take interval at twelve cables' length apart. As soon as the action commences ships will echelon four points to the starboard, still preserving the crescent formation, until the right of our fighting-line rests upon the Rock and the left tends towards Algeciras. When this position is reached and the attack pressed home we may safely leave all ships within the crescent to the care of our friends on shore, and give our immediate attention, if possible, to such of the enemy's cruisers as may be in the Straits. Our cruisers and gunboats will take station on the right and immediate rear of the *Ramillies*, to prevent torpedo attacks from that quarter.

About the same time Vice-Admiral von Grüdenau, to whom, by virtue of seniority, the command of the combined squadron had been assigned, was consulting with Contre-Amiral des Vismes de Monthier as to his plan of attack.

"It is above all things important," he insisted, "that the cruisers should get to sea and reach Brest intact, if this absurd rumour about a contemplated invasion of France by England be correct. I, therefore, my comrade, ask you to command the assault upon the battleships, and I would recommend that you should endeavour to draw them into the Bay of Algeciras. When the fight is well advanced I will dash past with the cruisers through the open channel, but I would pray you to keep from beneath the guns of that infernal fortress. In the open bay you should have little difficulty in dealing with the Lord Seymour. After destroying his fleet you can leisurely follow me, leaving Gibraltar to itself, and sending your disabled ships—for the English will assuredly fight hard—back to Toulon for repairs."

The French officer, as fine a sailor as ever stepped on a quarter-deck, cordially assented, and, as it transpired, "Lord Seymour" would also have agreed to the Frenchman's part of the programme had he been present.

The shadow of the Rock fell across the path of the British ships as they steamed out, in magnificent array, to take up position in the Straits. It was a fine summer's morning. The coasts of Africa and Spain, with their green slopes merging into the brown hues of rocky headlands—capped by the deep blue of distant mountains—were clearly visible in the pellucid atmosphere, and a slight haze over the ultramarine horizon of the Mediterranean gave promise of a burning hot day when the sun rose high in the heavens.

Above all, thrusting its majestic pinnacles into the sky, towered the Rock of Gibraltar, grim, menacing, grandly typical of British power and dignity, whilst a Royal salute of twenty-one guns thundered a message of sympathy and fortitude to the passing flotilla.

As the last cannon pealed forth its solemn note over the bay, the band on the admiral's ship struck up "Rule Britannia," and the poetic midshipman in the foretop of the *Collingwood* was so overcome with the varied sensations of the moment that he turned for communion with a kindred spirit to a Scotch middy named Malcolm Macdonald.

"How do you feel, Scottie?" he inquired.

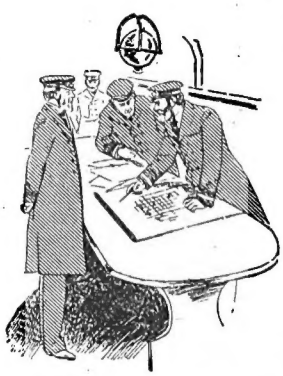
"I feel as if I wanted my breakfast," was the reply.

"Oh, I don't mean that," said the other with infinite scorn. "Doesn't your soul throb with the influences of the scene?"

"I'm minded to leave Froggy to think about his soul," said Macdonald. "I can smell the ham and eggs from here."

And even the poetic youth agreed, with a hungry look towards the deck, that it was time the relief came.

At nine o'clock the enemy was sighted, and des Vismes de Monthier formed his eighteen ships into a wedge-shaped array when he saw the disposition of the British fleet. At 9.30 the first shot was fired by the *Ramillies*, and the action was general a few minutes later.



"I propose, gentlemen."

Admiral Seymour was surprised at the ease with which the enemy allowed himself to be driven into the Bay of Algeciras. Under other circumstances the fact might have aroused his suspicions, more particularly because he had seen—from his favourable position on the outer horn of the crescent—the mass of cruisers and gunboats some miles in the rear of the attacking squadron. But outnumbered as he was, with a superior weight of metal against him, and a very much larger number of men on board individual ships than he possessed, it was utterly impossible to pay attention

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to any other concern than the matter in hand, which was pressing enough in all conscience.

The French Commander had a slice of luck at the outset.

His ships being in closer formation than the British vessels he was able to concentrate his fire from the apex of the triangle upon the centre of the British line. The *Camperdown* and *Alexandra* were smashed into absolute wrecks in a few minutes, and the former was only able to ram and sink the *Admiral Baudin* before she herself commenced to fill and settle down—barely giving the remnant of her crew time to jump into their boats and pull for their lives out of the maelstrom she created as she went to the bottom.

"How do you feel, Scottie?"

By this time the two horns of the crescent had closed well round the allied fleet, and the terrific fire of the British ships, aided by the tremendous current that swirls round the southern face of the Rock into the bay, was steadily driving the enemy into the position desired by Sir Michael Seymour.

At the base of the Rock, in front of the little Mall where the rank and fashion of Gibraltar assemble at eventide to listen to the strains of a military band, a small group of anxious gunners stood in the bastion of the 110-ton gun. This brown monster was lightly poised on its powerful hydraulic carriage a few feet above sea level. For the first time in its history it was about to finally determine the vexed question of its value in marine warfare.

Only once in its existence—on the occasion of its gunnery trials, after leaving the foundry—had a full charge of powder been used in propelling its enormous shell, weighing nearly 1,000lb., and capable of smashing its way at a distance of some miles through the body of the most heavily armoured vessel afloat. The great damage done to the rifling of the gun by that discharge led even its most sanguine supporters to allot it a life of but thirty rounds, and the opponents of gigantic ordnance predicted complete failure for the weapon when used in active warfare.

For purposes of annual target practice only a half, or even smaller charge of powder was used, and the lapse of years under these less trying conditions had not improved the rifling.

But Major Humphreys, R.A.—a tall, stern-looking soldier, with the reputation of a scientist even in the scientific arm—who was in charge of the gun that day, believed in it fully and fearlessly, and his cold, impassive face relaxed into a lover-like interest as he cast an approving glance over the superb contour of the placid giant which was so soon to bear testimony to its worth.

The opposing squadrons drew momentarily nearer. In the heat and fury of the combat, the French Admiral did not note the skilful manner in which he was being driven into the eastern portion of the bay.

Within the bastion the knot of men drew back in response to a quiet command from the Major. The latter, paying no heed to the actualities of the conflict from which the others could hardly tear their eyes, calmly scrutinised a small mirror which lay in the bastion, and formed the object glass of a species of camera obscura on which the Bay of Algeciras was outlined in quaintly diminutive but wonderfully distinct manner.

Another low-toned order, and the great gun swung round on its pivot to a determined point on the horizon. A slight depression of the muzzle brought it to bear upon a definite spot in the waste of waters—every superficial yard of which has long been triangulated within that bastion.

Then those who were near enough peered with the Major into the depths of the mirror, and saw the stern of a German battleship slowly cross a meridional line shown in the picture.

Major Humphreys placed the forefinger of his right hand—without the slightest apparent tremor in his frame, though every other man in the battery was shaking with excitement—upon a small white electric button at the side of the mirror. When he funnel of the warship intersected the vertical line he pressed the button home.

In that instant an appalling crash rent the air. Several heavy stones were dislodged by mere shock from their firm beds in the casement. Large masses of turf and grass grown earth fell into the sea from the top of the bastion, and a great cloud of dust and smoke momentarily obscured the view.

When this had cleared away, the stern of the *Kaiserhof* was seen to rise high in the air, with twin screws spinning madly round as she dived through the swirl of waters caused by the explosion of her boilers, and disappeared from sight.

A loud cheer went up from the other officers and men in the small inclosure, but the Major only took his handkerchief from his breast and carefully dusted the face of the mirror, upon which some specks of dirt had fallen.

The colossal cannon listlessly dropped back into the bastion by the force of the recoil. It was sponged out, reloaded, and rapidly hoisted into position.

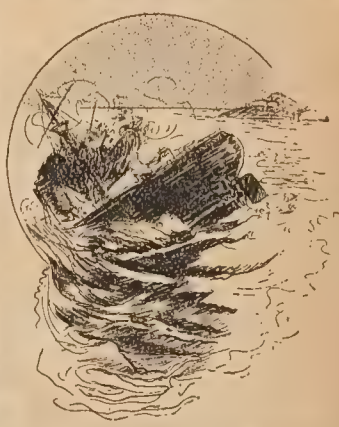
Again a ship, the *Sadowa*, drifted across the fatal line, and again the enormous steel-faced projectile shrieked through the air. Striking this time a little above the water-line, it smashed right through a 13-inch armour-plate, through protective coal-bunkers, through two immense boilers, and passed out of the other side of the ship, to fall into the sea some hundreds of yards farther on.

The *Sadowa* did not sink, but drifted helplessly away to the Spanish coast, and remained there, her officers and crew reaching France by train some days later.

Major Humphreys looked slightly annoyed, and he sharply told the subaltern in charge of the regulating vernier to be more careful with his distance calculations.

The subaltern *was* more careful, and the next French ship in the enemy's line went down with commendable exactitude.

These incidents did not escape the notice of the belligerents in the bay. During a brief interval the firing actually slackened, so astounded were both parties with the effect of this new element in the fight.



A German battleship succumbs.

Admiral des Vismes de Monthier gave imperative orders for a dash seawards, and even as the signal-flags fluttered in the breeze, and a German battleship succumbed to one of those demoniacal blows from 1,000lbs. of metal travelling at almost meteoric speed.

Sir Michael Culme-Seymour saw the signal and guessed its import. He had lost two of his ships, the *Camperdown* and the *Anson*, and the *Alexandra*, *Howe* and *Rodney* were disabled. But six of the hostile fleet, not including the four accounted for by the 110-ton gun, had gone beneath

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the waves with all hands, and the British ships plunged into the contest with renewed vigour, as the battle was now won to all intents and purposes.

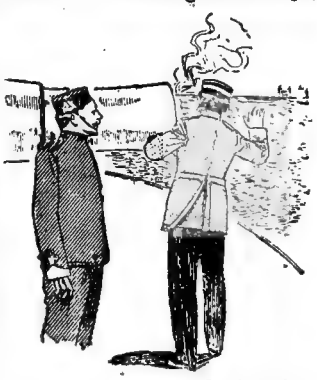
The French commander was as brave as a lion. When he found that he could not break through the encompassing ring he anchored his ship, so as not to be driven within range of that irresistible destroyer on the shore, and resolved to fight on to the bitter end.

A fifth of the allies' ships was rendered useless by a thunderbolt from the battery at the base of the Rock. But the effect of the shot called forth another sharp reprimand from the Major, and the gunner to whom he spoke replied respectfully, but firmly, that he had made no mistake in the range calculations of that he was quite sure.

The Major himself adjusted the vernier before the sixth discharge, and a great hole was knocked in the side of the *Sans Pareil*, but she did not sink.

The self-control which Major Humphreys had so far exhibited now deserted him. His hand actually shook as he pressed the electric communication for the seventh time, intending to finish the business of the *Sans Pareil*. But to the trained ears of the artillerymen in the bastion the explosion from the gun had a different sound, and the shell was seen to fall into the sea a thousand yards short of its object.

As the monster dropped back on its carriage the Major sprang hastily forward to the muzzle and gave a glance into the interior. Then he flung his arm round the grimy mouth of the gun and burst into tears.



Gave a glance into the interior.

The rifling had been ripped to pieces by the last shot, and the 110-ton gun was now an inert mass of iron and steel. The deep grooves were mangled and serrated with metal from the shells. The inside of the monster had been literally torn out of it, and the "Gibraltar Baby," as it was familiarly known in the Service, was completely disabled by its own superb power.

But it had nobly done its duty. Its cost to England was some £30,000, but its cost to France and Germany was more than three millions sterling, besides converting a possible victory into a certain defeat for the Allies.

The guns in the galleries of the Rock now joined in the fray, and there are 700 of them, big and little, new and old.

Common humanity impelled Admiral de Monthier to strike his colours, and he took such scant comfort as he could find in the fact that his colleague had slipped through the Straits, whilst the British fleet was unable to stop or pursue him.

The *Polyphemus*, *Hawke*, *Fearless*, and *Hebe* started off after the enemy's second fleet, it is true, but they were promptly recalled by Sir Michael Seymour, who ordered the *Seahorse* and *Cockatrice* to follow up the enemy, note his direction, and report at Portsmouth at the earliest possible moment. He also forwarded the *Surprise* with a brief dispatch announcing the result of the engagement.

When des Vismes de Monthier met the British Commander-in-Chief the latter promptly offered him his liberty on parole through the war, and the gallant Frenchman, after some demur, fell in with this magnanimous proposal.

"But," he said, speaking in broken English, "I would one leetle ting to ask."

"What is that?" said the Admiral.

"I would see ze *grand canon*," he replied; and he was taken to the bastion by the British Commander-in-Chief.

CHAPTER X.

A Journalistic Ally.

Unknown to the British Government, a new and terrible danger threatened one of the greatest of her colonies.

It was Russia who dealt the blow. This enormous power, which had so cleverly kept in the background whilst her allies were suffering the torments of defeat, had moved in the secret channels of diplomacy. Her powerful arm was being stretched forth in the East in an unseen and deadly manner.

Since the victory of Japan, Russia had seized her opportunity, and with fine cunning and dissimulation had advanced a step in her sleepless designs against our Indian Empire. A private treaty gave her a foothold upon the coast of China.

By dint of promises, which were never intended to be fulfilled, and partly by threats which were far more real, she had succeeded in obtaining for herself the important harbour of Port Arthur, and a railway which was being constructed across the vast country of China gave her ready admission to the Pacific Ocean. It was this private arrangement which put into her hands a formidable weapon against England.

She had broken her faith, and had entered into perfidious alliance with Japan.

Adept in wild tricks of diplomacy, the Russian Government had induced Japan to hire it out to her entire navy. The bribe was no less than a solemn promise to hand over to the strong and ambitious young country, Port Arthur, with all its fortifications. Japan, still nursing her military glory and her ancient feud with her neighbour, was not slow to swallow the bait.

And thus Russia had disarmed the two nations, one by the treaty that she had already foully broken, and the other by means of a promise which she would only laugh at when she had gained her ends.

And thus, when England was driving an insolent foe from her waters, and, cut off from communication with her distant colonies, was helpless to serve them, the powerful navy of Japan, tried in war and efficient as if manned by Europeans, and led by French and German officers, was stealing through the waters to fall upon Australia, unprepared and undefended save by a few vessels which held watch and ward around her coasts. The world was now to see how far the enterprise and courage of a British Colony could prove itself when left entirely to its own resources. And a splendid example of resolution and fearless patriotism it was destined to witness.

For now a well-organised and simultaneous attack was being made upon the rich possessions of Great Britain throughout the world. And it was at just such a time that Englishmen and their enemies alike were able to comprehend, what peace had often been allowed in part to blur, the extent and wealth of a noble dominion, more fruitful and more widely strewn than even the Roman Empire itself.

There was Canada, stretching from ocean to ocean, and pressing through immemorial snows towards the Pole, loyalest of the loyal, cherishing her kinship with the mother-land as her dearest inheritance, oft suffering for her patriotic zeal, yet untempted by those who would seduce her from her allegiance or bribe her into independence.

Toward the south, too, was the Cape of Good Hope, with all the rich territory which lay to the north, the golden garden of Africa, scarcely yet tamed from barbarism, yet smiling in prosperity the home of a new and sturdy English race which could not be dazzled by its riches into forgetfulness of the country from which it sprang.

Vaster still was Australia with its neighbouring islands of New Zealand, the noblest pasture lands of earth, stirring with the restless activities of lusty enterprise, an empire in itself.

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These splendid colonies, long the envy of ambitious nations who coveted their wealth and rich possibilities, were scarcely protected against the danger that so suddenly threatened them. A few ships lay in their waters, but on land there were only the volunteer and militia battalions, who had now a first and unexampled opportunity to display their valour.

India alone was secure. That great country had for centuries attracted to herself the most daring enterprise and energy of England. The countless multitude of natives had been long won over to loyalty by wise government and by obvious motives of interest. But, threatened on all sides save the sea by enemies on its borders, India was occupied by what may justly be called the finest army in the world. The opportunities for active service it afforded showed the road to distinction, and most English officers who were fired by ambition or military ardour sought to find employment there. And thus by process of natural selection, all that was most brilliant and most resolute in the British military genius characterised the splendid army of India. Always ready for action, often called to the exercise of arms, experienced in every manner of warfare, it was enough to daunt the most courageous foe.

And daunt them it did. For Russia knew and feared the discipline and valour of the British troops in India. It was for this reason that she had treacherously concealed her participation in the great war. She hoped that the stress of circumstances might render necessary the withdrawal of the troops homeward for the purposes of defence. Thus shorn of her strength, India, she fondly believed, would become a ready victim to her schemes.

England, indeed, had already to contend with the most exasperating difficulties so far as her Colonial empire was concerned.

Whilst she knew that preconcerted attacks must be then in operation against every part of her empire, she had no means of communicating with them and giving instructions for the general scheme of defence. They were everyone isolated, and the War Office was distracted at the formidable obstacles that lay in its path. There seemed nothing to do but rely on native resource. And yet, even then there could not but be such terrible dissipation of strength through lack of a general organised plan.

It was at this juncture of affairs that the British Government found, in her hour of need, a new and strange ally, whose aid was more valuable, inasmuch as it was given unconsciously.

On Friday morning Lord Salisbury was in consultation with Lord Lansdowne and the Commander-in-Chief at the Foreign Office when a well-dressed, somewhat nonchalant young man came along Whitehall, walking at a brisk pace.

His keen eyes, his face, thin and a trifle sallow, his quick and restless manner, all betokened the American. Mr. Henry P. Chauncey had indeed crossed the water only six months back to undertake the responsible duties of London correspondent to the New York World. His piquant and brilliant articles had already made him well known in journalistic circles, and the power of his pen and of the journal in which he exercised it had made him a welcome addition to London Society.

He turned as he got to the Foreign Office, and sprang lightly up the steps. Advancing to the inquiry room he stirred up the clerks considerably by what appeared to them to be the most audacious request in the history of English politics.

"I want to see Lord Salisbury," he said coolly.

The clerk he addressed looked at him in amazement. He almost expected him to faint at such an announcement.

"Lord Salisbury!" he stammered. "What are you thinking of? You must be mad."

"I reckon not," replied the American. "Take him this card. I represent the World."

"The World! exclaimed the clerk. "I don't care if you represent the Universe! Do you think Lord Salisbury is going to admit reporters to his conferences?"

"Look here, young man," insisted Mr. Chauncey, "I have no time for a general debate on hypothetical questions. I don't think you know the methods of American journalism in this sleepy institution. You're a clerk here, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Then kindly do what I ask you. *I'll* take the consequences."

"But Lord Salisbury is engaged on urgent war business."

"He is?" exclaimed the American gleefully. "Why, that's exactly what I want to see him about. Just you skip in and tell him a representative of the New York World requests an audience, and that he'll not keep him five minutes."

Lord Salisbury was by this time alone. The War Minister and the Commander-in-Chief had just left him for Pall Mall.

He was pondering over an awkward problem which had puzzled all three, when Mr. Chauncey's visit was announced. He turned the card over automatically in his hand for a moment, and then suddenly his eye lighted up.

"Bring Mr. Chauncey here at once!" he ordered. The clerk, amazed, stared at him blankly a moment, then turned quickly on his heels, and, subdued and deferential, though seemingly overwhelmed, he ushered the journalist into the Prime Minister's private room.

The great statesman met him with grave courtesy.

"Sit down, Mr. Chauncey," he said. "Such an interview as this is extraordinary, and, I should think, unparalleled."

Mr. Chauncey bowed.

"The New York World is honoured," he said, and his alert mind conjured up the most startling "exclusive" that America had ever known.

"I do not know," continued his lordship "whether you are aware what the precise position of yourself and your colleagues is in this country at the present moment."

"My lord," replied the journalist with quiet dignity, "I am quite aware of it. If you choose to regard our presence here as likely to militate against the safety of England you would be justified in requesting us to leave."

"That is so," replied the Premier. "But you need fear nothing. I believe in candour to the Press. It is too mighty a power for us to affect to neglect or despise it. What I propose is this—and I ask it as a favour. You shall call each day at the Foreign Office, where certain *bona-fide* and important news shall be given you. Call later on, sir, and an official shall give you such news as I can afford to make known. I shall trust largely to your discretion. A journalist of your standing and experience needs no word of caution."

Mr. Chauncey was profuse in his thanks, and was almost inclined to pity the Herald. Lord Salisbury also had reason to be satisfied with result of interview.

Next day war intelligence from American papers was flashed over the entire globe, save to South and East Africa, which were alone unconnected. And with it was dispatched the following simple paragraph:

"The Minister for War has sent to every Colonial governor where possible a cable containing the single word 'Britannia.' At the Admiralty word is hourly expected from Canada announcing that the fleet stationed there has sailed for England."

This item of news was read in all English colonies and dependencies, and the cabalistic word, making the message obviously authentic, was read aright by British representatives, who grasped at once the stratagem that had been used. And thus, in a moment the British dominions were prepared for the shock of war and knew the line of defence.

It was the first time in the history of nations that a Prime Minister had recognised the value of journalism as a force in war, and had used its stupendous organisation to save the fortunes of an Empire!

(To be continued.)

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Asa Fleetwood's Story.

"What was the queerest thing I ever seed?"

We five were lounging in the little cabin after a long day's tramp over the Canadian hills; the dogs lay sprawled on the rough boards, with weary limbs toasting before the fire; and the smoke from our pipes was poisoning the sweet September air with every degree of smoulder ng long cut, fine cut, and mixture.

The guns had been cleaned and polished and put away; the cartridges were oaded for the morrow; and we four de'egates from civilisation had been whiling away the last drowsy hour before rolling up in our blankets by the rec'tal of adventures real or imagined—such tales as hunters love to tell and oth r hunters love to listen to. Then the doctor, with a sly wink at the rest that signified something of interest, had called upon our guide, old grizzled Asa Fleetwood, for his contribution to the marvellous.

"I dunno if I kin give you anything that'll strike you, gentlemen, as worth the hearing on. I've seed some strange things out yere in this lonesomeness—yes, and been in 'em too; but I can't tell you of no sich things as you've been telling on—no deers killed with popguns"—Asa s disrespectful name for our silver-trimmed revolvers—"nor no wild hosses ketched by salting of their tails"—and the old fellow grinned at his own joke—"but I kin tell you jest a plain, every-day story of something I seed onct, that I'll never forget—not to my last minute on this earth."

He paused, with a "by your leave," to fill his corn-cob from the nearest box and tapping the "bright Virginia" into the bowl, looked round at the faces silhouetted against the fire, pulled a moment at the pipe to get it well alight, settled himself back into a more comfortable position, and began his story:

"About the time I first located in these parts, when deer and b'ar, and wolves and game was p enty, and every thing a feller needs could be had for the taking on it, along over the trail one day, pack on back and a whole gun-shop of wepins stuck on all over him, kinder singing so tly to hisself as he walks, up comes a littl chap what says to me: 'Howdy, stranger?' allows as how his name was Marlow—Jim Marlow—claps hisself down by my fire like as if he was coming to a party, and jest makes hisself to home.

"He weren't much to look at; jest an ornary, homely little chap, but clear grit and a heart o' gold, as I found out arterwards. Well I won't bother you with telling how it came about, but anyway, we become pardners, Jim Marlow and me, an worked our traps in cahoots, and took turns at the cooking and dish-washing. Oh, you needn't laugh, we washed 'em all right when we wasn't in too much on a hurry.

"Bimeby—maybe two weeks, maybe more—he lets on as how he has another pard in the East, a-following him on the trail; and if I ain't convenient—which I wasn't noways—he'd be glad to have him kinder join in and be one of us. And I allowed the woods was big enough for three, and anybody as Jim had tied to would go all right with Asa Fleetwood.

"And sure enough, afore the month was out, along he comes jest of a nightfall, a leading of one hoss and a-riding of another: and when he sees our camp smoke, out he lets a great 'halloo' that sets the woods a-ringing, and when Jim hears that, up he jumps and tears away down the hill like mad; and this other he off his hoss and runs to Jim; and sich a shaking of hands and clapping each other on the back I never did see in all my days!

"Well, presently along they come up the hill, and Jim allows as how I was Asa, and this other, he was Rube; and we onpacks his hoss and stows his kit comfortable-like, and inside of two days we might ha' been three brothers, Reuben Weathersbee, Jim Marlow and me, so snug and smooth everything was a-running.

"And one day, along in the fall, and the leaves turning brown, and some on 'em red on the trees, and the squirrels a-lining up their winter nests with acorns and a-chirp-chirping all the day long, and the chick-partridges a-skurrying arter the old birds pretty nigh under your very feet—which I s'pose made him think of his own little chicks—Rube says: 'Boys, this yere thing is gelorious, and I don't want nothing better than for to spend my days right out yere along o' you and in this yere clearing.'

"And we was agreeable, sure enough, and he goes on to say as how he'd a mind to build hisself a little home and slick everything up fine, and when he got her done, why he'd send away to the States for his wife and little ones. Well, sirs, that thing gave me a kind of turn, for let alone the building of a house out thar in the woods, and a rough feller like me a-sleeping anywhere but out o' doors like I'd been used to, I weren't much on a hand for women folks noways.

"But when I looks at Reuben, and sees his face all

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lit up and the tears a-shining in his eyes, I jest gives in right thar, and lets on as how this yere thing was downright mostly needful for to perfectify our little camp.

"And every spare minute arter that we was a-working on the litt e house and a-widening out the clearing. And sich a chopping down of trees, and sich a hauling of 'em yere and a histing of 'em thar, you never hearn tell on. And bimeby she beg ns to look like a house; and Jim Marlow and Rube and me was a-riding over to the settlement, twenty mile away, and a-swopping pelts and sich for doors and windys and pots and kettles and fixings; and a-toting 'em back over the hills, and a-bumping 'em agin the trees, and a-yanking 'em through the brush till it was a wonder we didn't smash the whole outfit.

"And all this while we was a-guessing, Jim and me, how he was la-going to let 'em know ab ut it, away off thar in the States for, bar making a good black mark on a paper when we took up the land, we was no scholars, neither on us, nor had no book-larning, though I've picked up maybe a smattering since. And we knowed a whole wilderness of them little black crosses wouldn't tell her nothing of the little house, nor of Jim Marlow nor me, nor how to get whar we was, unless she was to take 'em for blaze marks on the trees.

"You see I was dreadful ignorant in them days. But Rueben, he was eddicated, and when the time comes, but he gets a bit of board by the firelight, and a piece of paper, and a thing he calls a envyloop, or some sich name, with a little pictur pasted in the corner, all handsome and convenient, and he falls to a-writing of his letter; and Jim and me, we helps with our idees quite promiskyous, and when at last he gets her done, and folded up, and sticks her in the envyloop, all hands takes a lick to wet the gum, and seal her up, so as to say, the whole on us, for this yere invitation was our sentiments.

"Then we gives three cheers for the little house and for the little family a-coming out to live in it, jest for luck and g od feeling, you know, and next morning Reuben rides away over the trail to ketch the Wednesday stage and post his letter.

"Well, about a month afterwards—and Rube a-riding in to the settlement every time the stage comes through to get his answer—one night, back he comes a-whooping and a-le ting out halloos and hollerings for very joy; and when he comes in sight o' us, he waves a little white thing in the air; and then we see he'd got his letter.

"But we had a time a-reading on it, for it's a durn sight easier for to write a letter—what we said ourselves—than to read a letter—what other folks said? And Jim and me a-helping all we could, and a-looking at it wrong side up, and hind side afore—I knows be ter now-a-days—and a searching for crosses, which thar wasn't nary one in the whole letter, and all on us mostly skipping the long words; anyway we made out the sense of it, and she was a-coming, she and the little ones, in the next stage to foller.

"Well, I don't s'pose you ever see sich fools as we was a-trimming up that cabin in and out with spruce boughs and a-nailing up shelves and women's fixings: and it was jest hammer, hammer, hammer, all the day long, and pretty much all the nig t, too, and then up at it a in in the morning, till our fingers was that sore with missing the nail-heads and a-pounding of ourselves—and the cabin that stuck full of nails I don't believe you could ha' clapped a squirrel-skin up anywhars without you'd touch a dozen 'n 'em.

"And when the time comes nigh and the hours was getting shorter. Reuben was a-running out-door to take a look, and a-running back in-doors to take a look, and a-changing this yere and a-moving that thar, and a-fidgeting about the whole place till Jim and me was near druv wild.

"And the day afore they was to come, and Rube sorter standing all by hisself and a-thinking, and a-thinking, all of a sudden he says, along o' nothing: 'Boys, I—I can't go down thar in the settlement and meet 'em first—afore all those folks—I—jest can't do it. Why, I about know I'd make a varm nt of myself, a-hugg ng and a-kissing 'em, and like as not I'd go to crying and disgrace 'em—when I sets eyes on them babies.'

"And Jim and me, we sees his heart wa- in it, so Jim, as knowed 'em anyway, why he allowed he'd go down and meet 'em at the stage and borry a waggon, and bring 'em out as far as the trail would let a waggon come.

"And Reuben and me was to walk over and meet 'em at the big divide, jest where the trail dips down into the ford and then falls a zig-zagging up the foot-hills. For you see when you gets a-top of them hills, the trail was fair and straight for quite a piece, and we could see 'em coming a long ways off.

"And so we fixed it.

"And that night the snow came, and in the morning it was a-laying so t and white all over the trees and over the trail, and everything jest a-shining in the sun, sorter joyful like. And Jim, he says as how we needn t be surpr sed to see him coming back a-sledding, and if thar was any jingle-bells in the place, why he would have 'em. And he rides away on the old roan hoss, a-leading of the bay, and both on 'em a-swish-swashing through the snow, and we a-dancing and a-shouting on the hill to keep him company as long as he could hear, jest like two children.

"Well, sirs, thar was more come with that snow than we first thought on; for along about two o'clock, jest arter we'd lit the first fire in the fireplace, and was a-standing out-o'-doors to see the smoke pour out the chimbley, we hears a howl, and then another—long and shrill and dismal-like. And Rube turns white as the snow thar, and jest says one word: 'Wolves!'

"Now a wolf ain't no great critter for a man what's well and strong, and got a gun, and, maybe, could climb a tree, to be afeard on, but when he's got a wife and babies coming through the woods to meet him, and they not knowing the ways of wild things anyway, and Jim with nothing but a little popping six-shooter for to defend hisself on—then I tell you wolves is different! And every time they yelled away off thar atwixt us and the settlement, some way our hearts jest clim' right up in our throats and stuck thar, and we a-pant ng.

"Gentlemen, it takes a tidy while to tell about it, but it wasn t two shakes afore we was in the little cal in, and we grabs a gun yere and a hatchet thar, and I don't know what all, and then away we goes a-tearing down the trail, teeth shet hard and nerves and muscles braced for a long race over the white snow. And all the while that wild howling a-getting nearer, and a-getting nearer, and the cold chills a-creeping up my back and a-shooting down agin' and the agony in Reuben's face a-deepening, ever' time we hears that distant yell.

"The good Lord only knows how we got thar, so scared and tremblyous and all onfit for running as we was, but anyway we reached the last hill over the ford, and jest as we was a-going to plunge down the trail, Rube stops short and throws up one hand, and says with his lips as plain as though he'd said it with his voice—

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for we had no breath left for talking with—'Listen!' And sure enough, away off that we hears, faint and distant-like, a little 'crack!'—and then another and another—six of 'em—about as loud as snapping of a little twig. But we knowed what it meant: it was Jim's six-shooter a-speaking bravely for the wife and little ones, a-coming on the trail.

"Then down we goes over the hill, and splash, splash, into the ford, up to our knees, up to our waists, up to our arm-pits in the icy water—but a-holding our arms up high and a-keeping our guns and amynition dry for to do death on them yelping fiends! And when we gets atop of the hill, we hears 'em coming 'round the bend, the little gun a going zip-bang—agin—six times; and then a little space for him to load, and then onct more, six times.

"And all the while the wolves a-keeping up that yell, howl, and yell agin—that turned our blood to ice; and we a-going on, a-staggering, and a-stumbling, and a-straining of our ears to listen.

"And jest then they comes in sight, a good mile away, but seeming nigh almost enough to touch 'em in the cold, clear air—the hosses all alash, the low sled a-bumping on the fallen logs, Jim a-standing up and laying on the whip—and every little while a-throwing back his arm—and then would come a little puff of smoke—and then we'd hear the piff-bang a-floating on the air; and in the sled, all of a huddle on the floor, a tumbling, bouncing heap we knowed was Rube's wife and babies.

"And Rueben gives a awful groan, and stops, and throws up both arms, dead-beat and all unnarved, and looks at me appealing-like, but I could only shake my head, and drag him on. I knowed they never make it to get in shot of us the way it looked, afore the wolves would be upon 'em; for they was ga'ning now—and coming up with every stride—and we so helpless.

"And jest then Jim fires two shots, snap-bang, at a wolf as was a-getting up abreast of him, but only twice, and part of the pack stops and pitches on this dying one; but the rest keeps on, and Jim flings something bright and sunny in the sun squat in the face of one a-coming up on t'other side; and then we see his last shot was gone, and he'd throwed away his wepin—for every pound counted. Then presently, out goes the buffalo-skin—and then something else; and each time the pack stops, and some on 'em rolls over and goes heels up in the sudden check, and back agin and take a sniff, and when they finds their bite don't draw the blood, then bark back arter the chase, and a-getting nearer, nearer all the while.

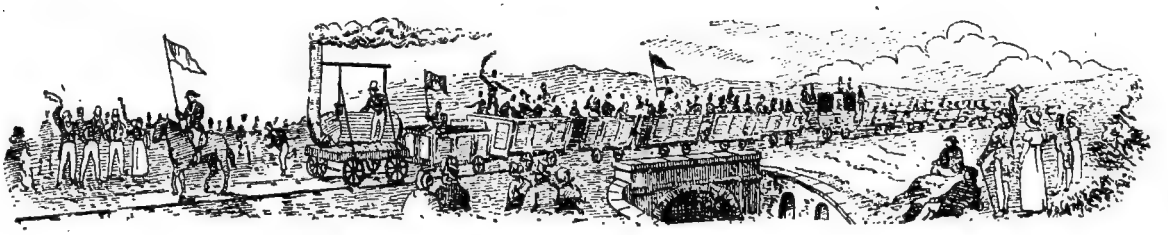
"And now we kin see Jim's white face, kin hear him shouting to the horses, and shouting at the wolves a-gaining grim and deadly—and Rube kneels down and throws up the barrel of his rifle—but drops it quick agin and gives a moan; he darsen't fire for fear he'd hit something else, dearer a thousand times than his own body.

"And then it was, gentlemen, I seed the strangest, queerest thing I ever see in all my living days; for Jim, he sees he'd never win the race with all on 'em, and he jest up and stands on the seat, sharp and clear ag'inst the white sky, gives the horses a last clip with the lash, kinder kiss-s his hand to the sunshine he never was to see agin, whips off his hat, and waves it—jest like this—twice or maybe thrice around his head, gives us a ringing cheer across the snow, and turns and vaults back among those yelping, shrieking fiends. They climb on him and tear at him; he fights 'em with his bare hands, strikes 'em with his clenched fists, and jest then, while we was glaring at it all, so helpless and so hopeless, along come the panting horses and kinder slows up.

"Some way or other I bundle Reuben in and he grabs the reins, flings me his gun and cartridge-belt, and then away, away with his wife and babies for the home on the distant hills, while I goes rushing back, shouting, screaming, but too late. I never seed dear, old, trusty, homely Jim agin; never heard his bonny voice arter that one cheer; jest seed a shapeless something on the bloody snow, heard them fiends a-crunch-crunching that I hear again in dreams until this day. Then all the snow and trees and hills and sky turns kinder black afore my eyes n I give one yell to Jim that I'm a'coming—and knows o more until I finds myself, knife in one hand and hatchet in the other, a-hacking and a-stabbing and a-chopping those hounds of Satan—shouting, drenched with blood—theirs, and his, and mine.

"But I'm alive to tell on it. And—Jim—don't mind an old fool's tears—I—I've seed the winter snows fall soft and white this twenty year upon the little pile of stones that marks the spot; but Jim don't need no monument, for in our hearts he's living still—and loved—and unforgotten."

Charles Burton.



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HOW HE WON.

When a girl puts both arms round your neck and buries her face on your shoulder and tells you that she can never, never care for you in that way, you don't feel absolutely discouraged. Heaton didn't, anyway. He kissed her hair, very mildly, so as not to call her attention to her position, and asked for an explanation.

"Why, it's all so light and jolly, what I feel for you," she said unhappily. "I never have cried about it, or lain awake over it or anything. When you come, I m so happy I could jump up and down, but when you go, really, I don't much care."

"Don't you miss me?" he asked.

"If you are away long, I may think about you a good deal, but I don't miss you with an ache. Why, when you're nice to another girl, I only feel a vague prick or two. I don't in the least want to scratch her eyes out."

"Did you ever care the other way for any one?"

"No. That's the worst of it," she sighed. "I used to think I hadn't found my soul, but now—oh, my dear, I'm afraid I haven't got any. Perhaps I'm just naturally shallow. If a little, cheerful, easy going, half-a-crown love like this is all I can feel, well then, I won't marry at all."

And she drew herself away, to drop down into the big chair.

He came and sat on the arm unrebuked. She even leant against him a little, as though refusing a man gave him privileges.

"Isn't it possible, Amy, that you care more than you think?" he ventured. "Perhaps if it were tested——"

"But I have tested it, a hundred ways. For instance, I play that I meet an acquaintance, and she says, 'Oh, by-the-way, did you know that Mr. Heaton was engaged to be married?' I feel a queer little squinch, but I can always answer instantly, 'No, indeed, who is it? Do tell me about it,' and listen to all the details without giving a sign. If I cared the right way, why, I'd be simply overwhelmed. No amount of pride could make me hide it. You see, I'm perfectly honest with you."

"But I'd rather be loved laughing than crying," he protested.

"And you may like sunshine better than shade," she answered; "but it's only on the surface of things, and doesn't last. Darkness goes right to their centres. There's no use arguing. It isn't r al love if it can't hurt. If you can make me unhappy about you, then——"

"Then?" he repeated, lifting her face. Her eyes were as frank and innocent as a child's.

"Yes, then," she said.

Heaton had always thought wooing was merely a matter of loving, but he now turned to artifice and did his clumsy best to awaken his princess by worked up effects, since the simple, time-honoured kiss had failed. Remembering a hackneyed saying, he tried for pity first, but it refused to come to the aid of its kin.

When he sat looking at her in moody silence, turning away occasionally with set lips and deep, quick breaths, Amy found him "too sleepy to be interesting" and sent him home.

And when he flattered himself he was becoming effectively pale and wan, she told him he was losing all his good looks.

Jealousy was equally disappointing. After he had bored himself by making a beginning with another girl and flaunted her in the face of his lady-love, entirely for the latter's own good, the two girls took a sudden violent fancy to each other, and spent all their spare time talking in low, intense voices that dropped back into commonplace on his approach, so that it was he who felt *de trop*. The jealousy all came back on his own head, and Amy was frank and friendly and fond, but nothing more.

He alternated weeks of devotion with weeks of neglect, and she did not seem to notice the difference. Nothing piqued her, and she refused to quarrel.

Neither moonlight nor firelight affected her mood, and when he caught her hand with sudden fierceness she smiled serenely and said he was a dear boy. It was like trying to cut a hole in water.

At last, utterly discouraged, he gave up. He could

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not hurt her, could not even touch her inner self. He flung aside his poses, bravely accepted his failure, and met her as he had before, without ruse of any kind.

This went on for a week. On the night of the seventh day, Amy faced herself in the mirror with a new expression.

"Well, he has given it up," she said. "He has decided that I'm not worth winning, and he's not going to try any more. I hope you're satisfied."

She turned out the light and crawled into bed.

"Oh, I don't blame him!" she said to herself. "I wouldn't be sorry for him, and I wouldn't be jealous, and I wouldn't understand. I was simply hateful. And he has given up trying. He doesn't care any more. It's —it's all ended."

And now she was groping under the pillow for her handkerchief. An hour later she gave an impatient sigh

"If this is the way it hurts, I wish I'd never found out," she said.

The night went by very heavily and in the morning her eyes were lame. When he came she was cool, distant, and inclined to sarcasm, and the stupid man thing went away hurt. Then she sent him a little note, and after it had gone burnt with shame and resolved to meet him more coldly than ever. But a glimmer of sense was dawning within him, so he kissed her before she could show her attitude. And after that she didn't have to.

"So my wooing wasn't altogether wasted," he said later.

"Yes, it was," she answered. "It was the stopping it that did it." And she never understood why he laughed

MARIAN WEST.

Revealed by Accident.

I MET Louise Elkins in the street to-day. Louise is an old maid now—she must be, for she is older than I, and I am nearly forty—and nobody would believe that she was ever pretty. Yet she was once called a beauty.

But I did not intend to say anything against Louise. She was my intimate friend once, then my "intimate enemy," then the object of my unmitigated and outspoken displeasure and contempt, but for a long time even the last phase of emotion connected with her has subsided into the most perfect indifference. She cannot harm me now, and she, doubtless, has long lost all desire to harm me. Once, however, it was different.

I first met Louise Elkins when I was a girl at school. We became intimate, and I learnt to love her, to feel a want when she was absent, and to enjoy perfect satisfaction in her presence. She was my confidante, and I thought that I was hers. The time came when I knew that she had never confided in me, but had shown me only the surface of her thoughts, and deeds, and purposes.

How many times she comforted me with words and caresses, hypocritical as they were sweet, for the very disappointments that she had carefully and remorselessly prepared for me. How many times I was tempted to believe that a malignant fate pursued me, thwarting all my most cherished plans, when it was my "friend" who thus coolly and silently stood ever between me and the accomplishment of my desire.

But the final act came after school life.

Two years after I left school, Louise paid me a visit. We had met but once during this period, when I paid her a visit of several weeks at her father's house, in a pretty suburban town. This visit she had come to return; but in the meantime, our correspondence had been so frequent and uninterrupted, that my affection for my dearest friend, as I loved to call her, had never flagged.

I welcomed her with delight. There was but one person whose presence had ever given me deeper joy, but even my love for Guy Carleton, absorbing as it was, had not weakened this long cherished, but widely different affection.

We had much to tell each other and we had to hurry away, finally, to dress for dinner.

I had scarcely finished when Guy was announced.

I stole down for a moment before going to Louise. It was to tell him of her arrival; how disappointed I was to perceive that he did not share my delight, and that his fine face clouded as I spoke rapidly and joyously of the long-desired pleasure of introducing my two loved friends.

I checked myself in alarm as I saw this.

"What is the matter, dear Guy?" I asked anxiously. "Are you not well, or does that horrid business trouble you again?"

"I am quite well, Dolly," he replied, "and the business which has given me so much annoyance will soon be satisfactorily settled. But I am sorry this girl has come. Forgive me, dear, it may be selfish, but I cannot resist the premonition that she will come between us—perhaps to destroy our happiness for ever."

I laughed gaily.

"Louise come between us—the best and dearest of girls to destroy our happiness! Why, Guy, can you believe any friend of mine, anyone so loved and trusted could do that? But you do not know Louise. She will rejoice in our happiness as if it were her own—she is the most unselfish creature, the most——"

"There, that will do!" interrupted Guy, with a laugh. "I did not mean to set you off in defence of your friend, but might have known what I would draw down upon myself. I am sorry I annoyed you, but I cannot think of having a third person always in our way, for weeks perhaps, with every patience. Pardon me, dear, for if I had loved you less, I should not have cared."

Louise made a decided impression upon Guy Carleton.

His opinion of her changed even during the first

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evening of their acquaintance, for as we parted he whispered that she was a charming girl, and would be a most agreeable addition to our small circle.

Imperceptibly the change increased. Guy was our constant visitor, and was necessarily much in the society of Louise.

He paid her marked attention, but she was very quiet, and I said he owed it to me to do so.

Still, when in our walks I was suffered to fall behind, alone and unheeded, it required all my affection for my friends to look calmly on, and see them so absorbed in their conversation as to forget my very existence.

Louise had a rich voice, the rarest I ever heard from one who was not a professional singer, and Guy was passionately fond of music. I could not sing, but I played well, at least so I have often been assured. In the early period of Louise's visit I often accompanied her upon the pianoforte, but at length she discovered my accompaniment did not suit her voice, and Guy joined in her criticism. I relinquished my seat to her, and never again was asked, or offered to play while she sang.

Nor was I missed, apparently. I used to sit for hours in some obscure corner, or out upon the vine-shaded verandah, while Guy bent over the instrument, so close that his dark locks seemed to mingle with the brown curls of Louise.

Guy was not less kind when we met alone. He was even more demonstrative than of old, as if thus he would atone for enforced neglects. I remembered that Louise had sneered at lovers and their absorbed ways, living for and thinking only of each other, and tried to believe that this was the cause of all that gave me so much suffering. But our next meeting, when I remained apparently forgotten for hours, would destroy this illusion.

At length a slight illness of my mother compelled me to attendance upon her for many days. While I was thus employed, Louise and Guy were left almost entirely to each other's companionship. Sometimes Louise would creep into my mother's room, and in her soft, caressing manner insist upon sharing my watch, but invariably, ere half an hour had elapsed, Guy would come to remind her of some forgotten engagement, and with a promise to take good care of my lover, she would run away to join him.

I seldom saw Guy during this time, and then, in one of these rare meetings, instead of noticing my pale cheek he chided me for allowing Louise to spend so much time in the sick-room.

I was too much surprised at this, as well as grieved, to tell him the truth at once: and before I could speak, the opportunity was lost. Louise had called him, and he had moved to her side.

But my eyes that had before begun to be unsealed were now fully opened.

I saw that Louise was false, that she was putting forth every art, even to imputing to me selfishness, to deprive me of the affections of my lover.

The revelation gave me the hitherto hidden key to her character. In all our intimacy of years I had never read, never known her before. But now, clear as if traced upon the printed page, I saw the record of the long series of her deceits and shameless perfidy.

I watched her more closely, and, with my new comprehension of her character, saw more clearly her motives, and the malignant triumph with which she beheld her victim each day more inextricably involved in her toils, while the friend for whom she still professed the warmest affection, was suffering agonies.

I prepared myself to what I believed must come. The period of Louise's visit as first arranged had passed, but she did not speak of departure, and I felt sure that she only delayed until Guy should be lured on to the point of proposal.

But an accident, one of those strange *contretemps* that even the most wily cannot always avoid, at last intervened to destroy her plans and reveal her character in all its deformity.

One morning I was passing languidly through the wide entrance hall, and saw Guy's small office boy, his Mercury, standing there, and holding two bouquets, which he presented to me. One was for Louise, and a little note accompanied it. With mine there was no message.

I called Louise from the parlour, and gave her the note and flowers. A wicked glance of triumph, disguised by a smile, was my reward, and she ran away upstairs to answer the missive.

Half an hour passed before she came down, and I saw her give two notes to the boy, telling him that one was for his master, and asking him to drop the other at the post office which he had to pass on his way homewards.

Another hour had passed, when from my post by my mother's bedside, I saw, through the open window, Guy Carleton coming hastily along the avenue. Louise was playing and singing in the parlour, but to my surprise he did not join her, but sent a servant to ask if he could see me for a few moments in the breakfast room.

"She has accepted him," I thought, "and he has come to be released from his vows to me."

But I was mistaken.

It was to the confessions of a penitent I had to listen. Louise had betrayed her true character to him.

The letter she had inclosed in the envelope to him had been intended for another, and had exposed her plot, and dilated upon her triumph.

Guy had read enough to show him all, before he recovered from his surprise, and comprehended how that letter had fallen into his hands.

So small a mistake revealed all, and set my lover free.

Guy inclosed the letter to her without comment, and that very afternoon she left us, without even the ceremony of a farewell.

I could not offer to see her, and she did not ask that I should.

Much as I loved Guy I could not readily forgive him for all he had made me suffer; but our great mutual happiness has long since eradicated every root of bitterness from my heart; and I can now only look with pity even upon the forlorn spinster, Louise Elkins.

GORDON MASTER.

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BY HER OWN HAND.

THE Cowes week had been over a good four days, and the party that had been g ther d together on board the *Cynthia*, Lord St. Ervan's cruising yacht, had had such a very good time of it so far that they had unanimously fallen in with their host's proposal to take a run round the Channel Islands, and then to St. Malo, and up the Rance, instead of scattering, as most of the other yachts' companies were on the point of doing, either to Homburg and Spa, the Italian Lakes, or the Scotch Moors.

The *Cynthia* had left St. Peter's Port in Guernsey, and was slipping along quietly over a smooth sea under the long slanting beams of the setting August sun, on her way to St. Helier.

The guests had disposed themselves in little groups about the ship's deck, according to their fancies, their social preferences, or their little designs upon each other.

One of the groups was composed of a dark-eyed, distinguished-looking man of thirty-eight or so, and a pretty *petite* Frenchwoman in a delightful sea-costume, whose complexion was so excellently preserved, whose general *tenue* was so perfect that the casual observer might well have been excused for knocking half-a-dozen years off the thirty-five which she was a long way from owning up to.

Madame de Bonneville was the semi-detached wife of a French diplomatist, who was just then pursuing his vocation at the other end of Europe. She was a good little soul, as Frenchwomen of the *grande monde* go, and though she was capable of holding her own in any sort of fun or adventure that was not hopelessly compromising, she was not more unscrupulous than the majority of women of her nation and position in life.

Her companion was Major Denver, of the ——th Regiment of the Line, in the forces of Her Britannic Majesty. He was a man who had seen plenty of service in different parts of the Empire; a thorough gentleman, with no more of the man of the world in him than was absolutely necessary for him to hold his own among his fellows. In addition to being a smart officer, and an altogether charming man in society, he was the possessor of a very considerable private fortune, and no less considerable personal advantages.

In fact, if Madame de Bonneville had only been the well-dowered widow that she would be some day and wanted to be at once, there was no other man she had ever seen with whom she would so willingly have tempted the lottery of marriage a second time than this dark-featured, strong-natured Englishman, who seemed so strangely, and yet so politely, indifferent to his very obvious opportunities in the matrimonial line.

The two were watching another group, seated aft near the wheel, composed of a very pretty English girl, who seemed to be still in her teens, l the of form, brown of skin, and of very manifest vivacity of character, and a couple of men, one youthful, almost to boyishness, and another well on towards middle age, with whom she was considerably more than holding her own in what seemed to be an undisguised three-cornered flirtation.

If Madame de Bonneville had been paying less attention to the girl and more to her companion, she would have noticed that every time he looked towards the other group his brows contracted almost imperceptibly, and a dusky sort of shadow, as if of repressed anger, stole into his dark blue eyes, turning them almost to black for the time being.

Even if she had noticed this, she gave no sign of having done so, and rattled along with her share of the conversation, which was naturally the greater, because the woman's share, in a pretty medley of good English and appropriately French idioms, that made her chatter a good deal more entertaining than it appears when necessarily translated into simple English.

"Really, Major, you know I find it quite impossible even yet to understand the extraordinary way in which you always extraordinary English bring up your young marriageable girls. Now, that young lady yonder, Miss Maud Driscoll, just look how she is carrying on with those two men! Of course it is all perfectly proper according to your ways, but, *ma foi*, it would be enough to turn the hair of a French mother grey with anxiety, and here you don't seem to think anything of it at all.

"Your English misses must really have the most charming life imaginable. They go about quite untrammelled, they talk as they choose to any men of their set that their fancy selects, they walk, they ride, they go boating and cycling without being worried in the slightest by chaperonage, and generally seem to carry on according to their own sweet will.

"Now, if that young lady had been born and bred in France she would now only just be coming out of a convent school, she would scarcely know how to waltz. A picnic or a boating party or a bicycle-ride would be a revelation still in store for her, and her knowledge of men would be confined to the male members of her own family and their most intimate and respectable friends —while here, she is at liberty to flirt to her heart's content, and have as many men in her train as her fancy dictates. But I am afraid that even among English young ladies, that Miss Driscoll must be something more than ordinary of what you call a flirt. Is that not so?"

"No," replied the Major, concealing his desire to say something rude under a drawling affectation of lack of interest in the subject, "I don't think Miss Driscoll is exactly a flirt, at least not more of a flirt than her opportunities compel her to be.

"You see, if men will openly proclaim themselves the willing slaves of a very pretty girl, it's a difficult thing for her, without making herself absolutely unpleasant, to avoid the appearance of flirtation, in fact she is almost driven to it; she must play one man off against another to a certain extent, if only in self defence, and to keep the balance of favours fairly equal. At the same time, I must confess that there is something about Miss Driscoll that I don't at all understand.

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"I don't know any other girl who has refused as many and as good offers as she has during last season and this. She has had two or three coronets laid at her feet, and quite half a dozen very respectable fortunes, usually with very decent fellows attached to them, and yet I think she could honestly say that she has steered her course so well, to use a yachting term, that she has never given any one man real reason to believe that she has in any sense trifled with him.

"The girl's a perfect mystery, and—well, I don't think there's anything more to be said on the subject, for, after all, the same description applies pretty equally to all the members of your delightful sex."

"Very charming, if a trifle vague, Major," replied Madame, looking up with a pretty little *moue*; "but I suppose the explanation of the mystery, after all, is that she is in no hurry to marry, and has not yet found what the modern novelists call her affinity."

"Very possibly," said the Major, with the air of a man who has had enough of the conversation, "very possibly; I don't suppose she'll be found more intractable than any other woman when the hour and the man arrive."

"No, I don't suppose she will, provided always that the hour does not come too late, and that the man is possible."

"Ah!" The Major let out the ejaculation involuntarily, and Madame distinguished a ring in it that told her quite as much as the plainest of words could have done. With the perfect tact of a well-bred Frenchwoman she promptly changed the subject, and the conversation ran along on more trival matters, until Miss Driscoll caught the Major's eye, and beckoned to him with the pretty assurance of a girl exercising a privilege which she knows will not be disputed.

Madame de Bonneville at once rose from her seat, and said, as though she had not noticed the signal, "Well, I must go into the saloon, for I promised his lordship that I would superintend the decoration of the supper-table, and after supper, you know, we are going to get out the roulette wheel, and indulge in a little pleasant wickedness at each other's expense. You don't gamble, I believe? but I have no doubt you will find something more interesting to do."

With this parting shot Madame vanished down the companion-way, and in another minute the Major had obeyed Maud Driscoll's summons. With dainty tact she somehow managed to give her two admirers to understand that their audience was over, and as soon as they were out of ear-shot she turned to her companion and said:

"May I ask, Major Denver, why you were regarding me with such an obvious air of disapproval from over yonder? Was that spiteful little Frenchwoman drawing any unpleasant comparisons between the freedom of the English girl and the artificial propriety of the French damsel in leading-strings?"

Denver laughed much more pleasantly than he had done a few minutes previously, as he replied:

Divination would seem to be one of your many accomplishments, Miss Driscoll, unless you heard what she was saying, for that is just what she was doing, only I can assure you, in the pleasantest fashion possible.

I think you are rather prejudiced against her. If I am any judge of female character, she is one of the best natured little women alive, and I believe would do almost anything to oblige anyone that she had really taken a fancy to."

"Then, if ever you stand in need of her assistance, I should think you are pretty sure of it, for she certainly seems to have taken a very strong fancy to you."

"Nonsense, child!"

The words came almost rudely from Denver's lips, and then, seeing a curious, half-scared expression on the lovely face that was upturned to his, he went on in strange confusion for so self-possessed a man, "On my honour, I beg your pardon a thousand times, I quite forgot myself. I——"

"Oh, never mind, I'm not at all offended; in fact, I suppose you do really look upon me from the altitude of your superior years as a sort of spoilt child, whose behaviour shows that she ought still to be in leading-strings herself. I suppose that is why you always treat me so differently to all the other men I know.

"No, no, that is by no means the reason," he replied with sudden vehemence, that hardly seemed warranted by the circumstances.

Then he checked himself and went on more quietly, but with an earnestness that looked very like strongly repressed passion.

"I do not treat you as other men do, because—because—I—that is—I mean to say you——"

"Are quite indifferent to me, and you are not so to some of the other men," she broke in almost petulantly, and with a sudden blush that turned the clear, healthy glow of her cheeks into a deep, rosy red. "Is that what you were going to say?"

He looked at her in undisguised amazement for a moment.

The words spoken otherwise might not have meant very much, but they were spoken in a tone that sent the blood flying through his veins as it had never done before, and showed him that what he had scarcely permitted himself to dream of, either was, or might be made into a fact—a fact that was at once delightful and yet horrible beyond measure for him to think of. The few petulant words, spoken in a moment of unguarded haste, had told the secret, which otherwise might never have been uttered.

True, nothing specific had been said; for Maud Driscoll was a girl who would have bitten her tongue in twain—as she now wished she had done—before she would have given him a hint as to the truth. But it was out now, and their eyes had met in a glance which told both of them that there was no further need, or even possibility, of disguise between them.

Denver drew a deep breath, as he might have done under sudden and intense physical pain, and then he put his hand on her shoulder, and said slowly and almost solemnly:

"I see that I must tell you the reason you ask for. It is not the one you imagine, or expect, but there is no time to tell you now. We shall have to go down to supper soon, and those fellows will be back in a few minutes.

"They are going to play roulette after supper, in the cabin. I'm not going to play, and I don't suppose you are. If you will come up on deck as soon as they are settled with their game, I will tell you what, after all, it is better that you should know; nay, what I fancy you now have a right to know, and then—well, then I will go ashore at St. Helier and the Fates must take their course."

While he was speaking she had looked him full and unflinchingly in the eyes, but with her little hands clenched, and her pretty lips drawn tight over her

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closed teeth. She knew that something that would be terrible for her to hear was coming, but she felt that it was inevitable, and she was too brave to shrink an explanation, which, if left unsaid, would leave even more torturing doubt in its place, so she simply said, in a low, steady voice:

"Yes, I will come," and then she got up and walked slowly and not very steadily towards the companion-way.

As soon as supper was over, and the table cleared, the roulette wheel was ready to spin, Madame de Bonneville was installed as banker, and in the brief confusion of the players taking their places round the table, Denver and Maud Driscoll found no difficulty in leaving the saloon to keep their tryst on deck. It was dark now, and the deck was deserted, save by the man at the wheel and the look-out in the bows.

Both knew what they had come there for, and there was no need for any preliminaries, so Denver went straight to the subject at once, speaking in the slow, deliberate tone of a man who was forcing himself to say that which he would infinitely rather have left unsaid.

"Maud—for I am going to call you Maud to-night, if you will let me—you said before supper that I looked upon you as a child; well, now I am going to talk to you as a woman, and you must listen to me as a woman. But tell me first, as a woman to a man, am I right in concluding from what you said just now, or, rather, I should say, from the way in which you said it, that—well, if I had behaved to you as some other men have, you would not have dealt with me as you have with them?"

As he spoke he felt her hand laid upon his arm; it closed with a firm, nervous grip, and she said:

"No, Frank, I should not, and—and—after that, there is no need for me to tell you that that is the explanation of what most people have, no doubt justly, considered to be my flirtations."

"Even so," he said, putting his hand on hers, and after a single pressure removing it again. "No sweeter words than those could have been spoken to me, and yet I would have given all I possess to have avoided the necessity of your speaking them. Now, listen, and, for Heaven's sake, don't interrupt me or I shall never get said what must be said now, in justice to us both."

"Go on," said she, "even if it be a death-sentence, let me hear it and know the worst."

"A death sentence it may be, so far as I am concerned and, if it is, all the better, for I have loved and lost even that which I can never possess. To-morrow I am going ashore at St. Helier to go back to Southampton, for before we left Cowes I had a letter telling me that my regiment is under orders for Burmah, and we are to sail in a week. There'll be some pretty smart fighting out there and—well, never mind that—that's only the least important part of what I have to tell you."

There was a deck chair under the bulwarks opposite to where they were standing. He crossed the deck, and brought it over. He put her unresisting and still silent into it. Then he sat down on the deck with his back against the mast, and began the story of the ruin of the life that he would so gladly have devoted to her in return for the unsuspected love which she had confessed for him.

He began at the beginning, and spared himself nothing in the recital, so that she might, at least, have the poor consolation of knowing fully the whole chain of miserable circumstances which was drawn like an impassable barrier between them.

He told her how, when he was a young subaltern fifteen years before, he had been entrapped into a marriage with a pretty, fascinating and worthless woman, who, after five years of wretched married life, had taken to drink, and who, for the last ten years, had been drinking herself to death by inches.

For the last four years, he had been separated entirely from her, and all he knew of her was that she was living in Paris on an allowance that he made her, a mere wreck of what she had been, and yet with an indefinite number of years of life before her, life that she clung to tenaciously, even to some extent restraining her passion for liquor in order that by going on living she might, as she told him with brutal frankness, revenge herself on him, for, as she called it, his betrayal and his desertion of her.

Told in detail, as he told it, it was a long and terrible story, which occupied nearly an hour in the telling.

Maud Driscoll listened throughout in silence, broken only every now and then by a quick, half-choked gasp of pain, that she could not altogether stifle, and so engrossed was he in telling and she in listening that neither of them noticed a light foot-fall on the other side of the sail, or was aware of the presence of a listener.

When at last the story was ended, there was silence between them for several minutes.

Then they both rose to their feet and Maud slipped her hand through his arm and led him towards the companion-way, saying as she did so:

"It is enough, it is the inevitable, and neither you nor I can struggle against it. I have loved and lost in the same moment, so have you, and now we must say good-bye."

Yielding to the ungovernable impulse of the moment, he caught her in his arms, and kissed her once, and so the good-bye was said.

Maud went below and at once retired to her own state-room, and to the surprise of the rest of the guests, Denver did what he had never been known to do before, joined the roulette-players and punted with a recklessness that won smile after smile from fortune until the growing pile of notes and gold before him prompted a lady loser to say somewhat spitefully:

"If there's any truth in the proverb 'Luck at cards, unlucky in love' Major——"

"It's a lie, like most proverbs!" laughed Denver with a savage ring in his voice that made everybody at the table look up at once. "If it's true here's a challenge to the Fates!"

As he spoke he put the whole of his pile on 13—and lost.

"You would have broken the bank, *mon ami*, if you had won that coup," said Madame de Bonneville's voice at his elbow. "I wonder if that means a turn of luck both ways? I am glad I got sick of the bank before you began your plunging. You would have ruined me before this. Happily, I had more prudence than you, for when I had won twenty pounds half an hour ago I retired on my laurels."

"Would you like to try again?" said Denver, moving back from the table. "I have had enough now, and am off for a smoke on deck."

Madame yielded to the temptation, and the Major went on deck again to smoke the smoke of bitter reflection. The next day he went ashore at St. Helier, and took the first boat back to Southampton.

Three months later he was hard at work in Burmah. Maud Driscoll had refused two more brilliant offers of

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marriage, and Madame de Bonneville, with the assistance of a private detective agency, had made the acquaintance of Frank Denver's dipsomaniac wife in Paris. She seemed to take a strange fancy to the wretched creature, and listened without apparent weariness to the story of her wrongs, told over and over again with the half-incoherent garrulity of a mind steeped in alcohol, and always ending with the same savage sentences:

"Yes, I must drink—I can't live without it—but I won't drink myself to death as he wants me to, though I often feel I should be glad to be done with it all. I am his wife, and he may cast me off, but he cannot get rid of me that way. I will live for years yet to spite him, and keep him chained to me. I dare say he has often wanted to marry someone else, but he shan't. I'll live to be a curse to him yet."

But in spite of this resolve, the miserable woman drank very hard at times, and before Madame de Bonneville had known her a month she was turned out of her lodgings for a worse drunken bout than usual. As a sequel to this, she was arrested for making a disturbance in the street, and would have been sent to the Salpetrière, had Madame not come forward, and, on the plea that she had known her in her better days, persuaded the police to hand her over to her, so that she might make one more attempt to reclaim her.

She gave her a couple of rooms in her own house, and armed with the police authority, kept her confined to them for a week, with the exception of necessary exercise under her own supervision. She did not allow her a drop of alcohol, and, replying to her passionate appeals for 'just a little with her meals for the present,' she told her that she must choose between total abstinence with her or the règime of the asylum. The dread of what was really prison enforced submission, but it did not quell her terrible cravings. On the contrary they grew fiercer and fiercer as each day of enforced sobriety passed.

This discipline had lasted seven days when Madame went to Versailles to spend two or three days with her sister.

Before she left home she gave strict orders that "Madame Denver" was not to be permitted to leave the house until her return, and that she was not to be allowed even to catch sight of any alcoholic drink. To make assurance doubly sure the housekeeper locked the outer door of her apartments, determined not to allow her to cross the threshold until her mistress returned.

The prisoner bore her confinement fairly well until the evening of the second day, and then she got restless.

There seemed to be something unaccustomed in the air of her room which excited her almost to fever point.

Some subtle aroma kept stealing to her nostrils, and she sniffed at it as a wild beast might have sniffed the taint of its prey on the air. The housekeeper brought her her supper, and then left her for the night, locking the door after her as she took the supper things away.

Still that faint but penetrating aroma in the room! It seemed to grow stronger after the lights were lit.

The dipsomaniac sniffed eagerly at it, wandering about the room to try and find its source.

Before long she found that it was most pungent near a little cabinet that stood in one corner of the room. She opened it and looked in, still sniffing. Then she put her hand in and when she took it out the fingers were tightly closed round the neck of a daintily chased decanter full of a bright green liquid.

She took out the stopper. Ah! there was no doubt now what the faint subtle smell had been. She stared with glittering eyes wide open in wonder at her fatal good fortune. Her nostrils dilated and her breast heaved as she carried the decanter to her trembling lips, muttering:

"Absinthe! absinthe! I wonder how it got there? They can't have known anything about it or they would have taken it away. I must have just a drop. I can fill it up again with water, and they'll never know. But I mustn't take too much, no not too much, for I have not had any for so long, and it might be dangerous. Absinthe is terrible stuff when you're not accustomed to it. Stop, I'll get a glass and take it comfortably. Just a drop, only a little drop!"

She went into her bedroom and got a glass off her dressing-table. She poured out about a couple of tablespoonfuls of the green liquor and tossed them off. She gasped for breath and stifled a cough for fear she should be heard and someone might come to see what was the matter. Then she got some water to fill the decanter up again. As she was going to pour it in the pungent smell rose to her nostrils again.

She paused irresolute for a moment, and then she put the water down and poured some more absinthe out into the glass, put a little water in and drank it. It was a bigger dose this time, and it was barely swallowed when the starving drink demon within her woke into frenzied and irresistible longing. She didn't think of filling up the decanter now. Even her revenge was lost sight of in that mad moment of re-awakening passion, tenfold intensified by the privation of the past week.

She drank again and again, taking more and more every time, till her throat was burning and her brain reeling, and her shaking hand could hardly carry the glass to her bloated lips.

They found her in the morning lying dead and stiff on the floor with the empty decanter still clutched tightly in her hand and the fragments of the shattered glass beside her. Madame de Bonneville was at once telegraphed for, and as soon as she got back and learnt the news she dismissed the housekeeper on the spot and rated the other servants furiously for leaving the wretched woman alone.

It was in vain that they denied all knowledge of the liquor. Madame vowed that she had left it safe under lock and key, that only the housekeeper had access to it, and that she must have been bribed to betray her trust.

Major Denver's agents, through whom his wife's allowance had been paid, were at once communicated with, and the next day a quiet funeral at Père Lachaise ended the last chapter of the story that Madame de Bonneville had overheard on the deck of the *Cynthia* between Guernsey and Jersey.

Frank Denver did not find the fate he went to seek in Burmah. "The luck had turned both ways" after all, and he came back with the Victoria Cross to find Maud Driscoll still waiting for the man and the hour—both of which arrived very soon after he landed in England.

Madame de Bonneville was invited to the wedding, but, to her very great regret, other engagements prevented her leaving France just then. She sent wedding-presents to both, and the bridegroom's was a pretty silver-mounted spirit-case, containing three beautifully chased little decanters.

LEVIN CARNAC.

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AVENGED BY A SERPENT.

WHEN I got George's letter, telling me that all was now ready for our reception and we were to come at once, I was delighted. Within a week we—mother and I—were on our way out, and in about three weeks' time found ourselves between the swampy shores of the Essequibo, nearing Georgetown in the United States, where on the quay the dear fellow was waiting to take us up to the home he had made for us on his plantation.

George Haden and I had met a year before during his visit to England and the big, quiet, sunburnt man and I, who tell his story, had fallen in love with one another almost at the first sight.

We were to have been married before he returned to Guiana, but he was recalled suddenly by the death of his only brother at Rio, and it was arranged I should follow later with mother.

You can—or, rather, you can't—imagine how delighted I was to see my sweetheart again. But I was startled and a good deal troubled by his appearance; he looked thin and worried. At first I put it down to his grief at Harry's death; but later, after our quiet wedding, on the way to my future home, I gathered by degrees there was more than that.

His brother Harry had married a Spaniard—a beautiful woman—who had died nearly eighteen years before, leaving him with one daughter, Teresa. It was chiefly on this girl's account that George had hurried back, and he had mentioned in writing to me that he had brought her up from Rio to stay with him in Guiana until other arrangements could be made. Since then I had heard little of her, and almost, indeed, in my own happiness and excitement forgotten her very existence.

Now my questions elicited from George that she was not a pleasant tempered young woman, or easy to get on with, but my worst anticipations did not touch the reality.

We came up the river in a small steamer, which dropped us at my husband's very wharf, and we three walked up a slope through a wonderful tropical garden to where a long, whitewashed, green-shuttered house shone clean and bright in the evening sun.

On the veranda stood a tall figure in a pale yellow gown, her black hair crowned with crimson hibiscus. A splendidly handsome woman.

She looked at me in a half-disdainful way.

"So you're my new aunt?" she said casually. "And how do you do, Uncle George?"

Her calm assumption of superiority was unbearable. George—big, steady, good-tempered man that he was—flushed with anger.

He whispered to me:

"Never mind, my dear. She knows no better; and it won't be for long."

But it was for longer than we reckoned. She was to have been sent to her godmother, who lived in Madrid. But the old lady was ill, and begged us to keep the girl a while longer.

It was trying to a degree, and each day got worse and worse. Teresa's temper was something unbearable, and her general lack of manners only equalled by her sweetness when there was anything to be gained by it. Still, for my husband's sake, I bore with her.

Toward the end of the cool weather our old English overseer died, and, as a stop-gap, George took on a young Spanish-American, Ramon Martinez.

Ramon was a smart-looking fellow, but there was something in his black eyes which repelled me. I always felt a shrinking repulsion for the man, and George didn't much care for him. Still, it was necessary to have some one who understood the sugar, and men who knew anything were so scarce you couldn't pick and choose.

Teresa, who loved the cheap gaieties of Rio, had been simply bored to death all the winter. Ramon was a godsend to her, and the two used to chat in Spanish every evening over their coffee on the veranda.

Sometimes I blame myself for letting them be so much together, but, to tell the truth, the relief of getting rid of her even for an hour or two was very great. And how could I know what a scoundrel the man was, or what unspeakable wickedness those two were brewing together?

And now I must pass over the events of the next ten months, and tell you what happened on that dreadful day which so nearly proved fatal to all my happiness.

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Old Juan, a half-caste Indian employé on the place, came up that morning wanting to see my husband. They talked for a time, and then I saw George go out with a gun on his shoulder.

He saw me at the window and called out something, but I could not hear what it was.

He was a keen collector, and I supposed it was some rare bird or beast he was after.

The day passed, and the short, tropical twilight was closing over the forest when I saw George returning. He was followed by two negroes, who slowly dragged some long, heavy object up the path to the house. This they pulled along, trailing in the dust, round to the south end of the house, where George's big so-called study, really a sort of museum, opened by two French windows on the Lawn.

I was dressing for dinner, so did not go out.

Soon I heard George's long stride pass upstairs by my door to his dressing-room, which lay beyond my room at the extreme north end of the house.

To make you understand what followed I must partly explain how the house was built. It was from north to south, long and narrow, with a verandah all the way round.

A wide hall ran through from east to west, and a long narrow one from north to south. The dining-room was the front room at the north end, under my room; George's study at the south, under the room Teresa occupied. There were two staircases, one at each end of the house. A couple of hundred yards away, higher up the slope at the back of the house, was the cottage where Martinez lived. He, Martinez, generally dined with us, and was to have done so that night.

Now, so far as I know, and judging from what we made out afterwards from letters we discovered in the cottage and in Teresa's room, this is what brought about the tragedy that followed:

Ramon must have long before this have made up his mind to marry Teresa. Her small fortune was an irresistible bait to the indolent Southerner. The only thing that troubled him was that she was not of age for another three years, and George was her guardian and sole trustee.

He knew well enough what George would say or do if he once heard of his pretentions. With a man of Ramon's type—almost conscienceless—the next idea was simply to get George out of the way. Once get rid of the uncle and what was there to hinder his making off with Teresa and her money?

Undoubtedly he instilled these ideas into Teresa's mind, and she, her sullen temper already aflame at the hint of opposition, was soon ripe for any mischief. Whether this precious pair had already concocted any definite plan I don't know, but that they were only waiting a chance what follows proves.

On this particular evening Teresa had dressed earlier and gone down. For some reason—I don't know what—she went to the study and opened the door.

A French window was open, and in the moonlight which had already succeeded the dusk she caught sight of something moving through it, undulating in rustling coils up from the grass beyond.

Terrified, she closed the door and stood an instant panting with fright.

What was it?

Suddenly it flashed across her.

She had just before seen from her window the men bringing in her uncle's spoil, a great anaconda, or water-boa, the largest and most powerful constrictor in the world.

This was his mate. Her chance had come.

Always before dinner her uncle would go to his room to fetch the cigar he lit immediately dinner was over. He would go once more—for the last time.

How I can imagine her stealing quietly away from the door back with stealthy footsteps up the stairs to her room and sitting there watching the clock, counting every moment till the gong should summon her uncle to his fate behind that closed door.

Closer and closer crept the hands to eight o'clock, and still she sat and watched.

Suddenly in the hall below sounded footsteps across the polished boards.

Unnaturally loud they seemed as they passed slowly down the passage beneath. There was the sound of a turning latch, an instant's pause, and then—one long, horrible sound, half shriek, half yell, which grew shriller, then muffled and then abruptly ceased.

The shriek I heard with almost equal distinctness away at the other end of the house. To this day I can sometimes hear it, and it comes back to me in dreadful dreams.

I heard my husband rush from his room and his flying feet down the stairway. Other sounds I heard—cries of terror and alarm, hurrying footsteps and slamming of doors.

Then I summoned courage to follow. As I ran through the hall two shots rang out in rapid succession. A frightful pounding, like a dozen sledge hammers going at once, ensued; and next I heard a scream of maniacal laughter, and Teresa rushed by me and out into the night.

The next thing I remember is George's voice, in tones of strong command:

"Keep back, Marian!" he called; "it is no fit sight for you."

I stood there in the middle of the passage, while round the open study door stood a little knot of our black servants. Their faces were ashen with terror, and the whites of their eyes goggled horribly. A thin smoke floated out of the room and the keen smell of gunpowder filled the air. The throbbing beat had almost ceased, and George passed into the room, while I staggered back, and, sinking into a chair in the hall, fainted dead away.

I need hardly explain what had happened.

The wretched Ramon had come in earlier than usual to dinner; had, contrary to his usual custom, gone to the study, evidently to leave the pass-book for the day, and had walked straight into the trap set for another. Those horrible coils had crushed him to death long before even George could reach the spot, while the great snake in its terrible death agonies, had rent the wretch's body in a shocking way, leaving an unrecognisable mass.

That was what Teresa had seen. The shock no doubt had driven her mad.

When she ran out she went straight to the river—at least, we suppose so, for we never saw anything of her again.

There are alligators in those waters.

Since then my husband and I have almost forgotten the tragedy. We are very happy alone together in our sunny tropic home.

C. T. H.

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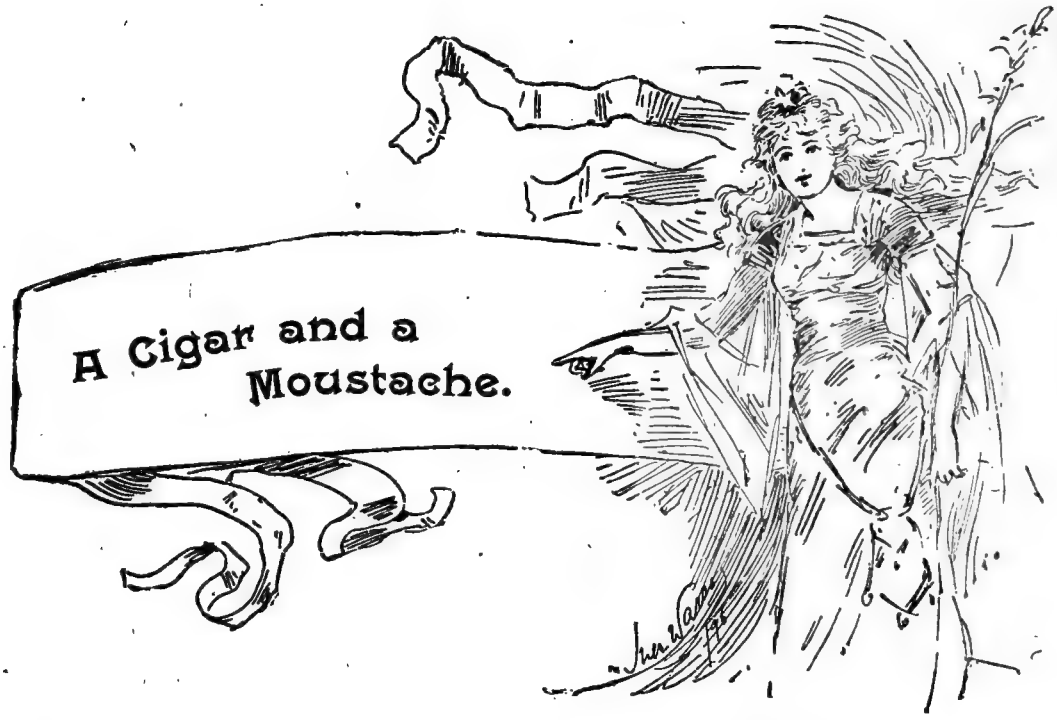

A Cigar and a Moustache.

As the coffee was being served, the lady of the house said: "You need not refrain from smoking, gentlemen, it is not in the least disagreeable to me," at the same time making a sign to her husband.

He left the table, and in a couple of minutes returned with a box of magnificent cigars, which was passed round from guest to guest. When my turn came I tendered it to my neighbour on the left, he gently declined, saying:

"Thank you. I do not smoke."

"You do not smoke," remarked our hostess, "how has that come about?"

"It's a penance, madam."

"A penance! I do not understand. Can you explain the mystery?"

"Certainly. Here's the story!

"Twenty-five years ago I was, at least so people told me, a fine-looking young man. I had at any rate a pretty fair moustache. It was quite thick in the centre, and graduated into two little sharp points at the sides which I used to twist cavalierly in the air. My friends said that no lady's heart could resist such moustaches. They perhaps, exaggerated, but I certainly captured a few.

"At last, one fine day, or rather one fine night, for it was at a ball—I fell in love. She was an adorable young girl. I danced three waltzes with her, and from the first I knew my heart was lost.

"When I made inquiries about her next day I learnt she was the daughter of a millionaire—a very honourable family—and that her parents expected something wonderful in the way of a son-in-law—a pearl in fact.

"A pearl! I was too modest to expect to realise the ideal demanded; and even though I were a pearl, as I had very little money I thought it better to abstain from all further advances.

"When one is in love it is rare—it is not easy—to keep the secret hidden. In short, mine went from friend to friend, and salon to salon, until at last it reached the ears of Mlle. Genevieve that a young man with a fair moustache was dying for love of her. It seems I had made an impression on her too."

"Your moustache?" I interrupted.

"Yes, my moustache. Whatever it was, Mlle. Genevieve made her papa understand that she wished to marry me.

"Our engagement lasted six weeks. Six weeks of paradise for me! Six weeks during which I was willing to sacrifice the world for Genevieve!

"Her saying, one evening, 'I beg you, my dear, not to smoke any more,' was enough to make me throw away at once the cigar just commenced, and I even determined not again to touch the box I had broken into that very morning.

"I expressly left it open within reach of my friends, of my *concierge*, of my servants, and I must say all these good people, as if they guessed my desire, did their best to diminish my chances of falling into temptation.

"At last the great day arrived, I mean the day of our marriage, before the Mayor.

"It was arranged that I was to meet Genevieve at her home at half-past one. I got up early, I shaved, dressed, breakfasted, put on my new dress coat, made expressly for the occasion. Then ready, having given the fancy twist to my moustache, I looked at my watch—twelve o'clock. An hour to wait. I was burning with nervous impatience. I went backwards and forwards. I sat down, I jumped up. Looking for some distraction to help to pass away this hour of waiting. My eyes fell on the mantelpiece and the cigar box. Mechanically I went towards it. I opened it. One cigar remained in the bottom. I took it out. I fingered it. It was of the

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choicest quality. I let it fall quickly back into the box again, and moved out of the way of temptation! I looked at my watch half a quarter past twelve. More than three-quarters of an hour still to wait. I returned towards the chimney, again took out the cigar, and bit the end off with my teeth. I lit it, and, stretching back in an armchair, I commenced to smoke. It was delicious, I leant back my head, closed my eyes, and in a couple of minutes I felt that sweet sensation, neighbour of sleep when thought ends, and dreams begin.

"I was suddenly roused by a slight smell of burning. I got up, examined everywhere hurriedly—the curtains, the draperies, my coat, waistcoat! Nothing! I must have been dreaming. I looked at my watch—twenty-five minutes past one. I rushed out, drove like fur to the house of my intended wife—both the concierge and coachman were trying not to laugh at my haste.

"When John, the porter, opened the door for me, he almost fainted with surprise.

"'Everyone has gone, monsieur. You are to follow on to the Mairie, so Mdlle. Genevieve told me to tell you. She did not seem pleased, monsieur.' I saw that the fellow could not keep from laughing.

"'Is it at me you are laughing, boy?'

"'Monsieur knows I will not do any such thing. Besides, he knows what pleases Mademoiselle, and if she admires them like that!'

"As I hastened off I heard a general tittering.

"At ten minutes past two I was at the Mayor's.

"'The registry of marriages? Not for yourself, perhaps?

"'Yes, for myself,' I replied.

"'For you?—Ah, she must be very good, very good!' And he fell on to a bench holding his sides with laughter.

"I don't know how I kept from boxing his ears. However he showed me the registry.

"I ran towards the door indicated, and entered.

"'Ah! Here he comes at last!' exclaimed my father-in-law.

"I advanced towards the table. Shrieks of laughter arose on all sides, The Mayor seemed smothering in his chair. Genevieve buried her face in her hands. Her mother gesticulated indignantly. As to her father, he came towards me, and said in a tone which showed he meant it:

"'Monsieur, everything is over between us.'

"'But what's the matter?'

"'The matter is monsieur, that marriage is a sacred thing—and that we are not going through the Carnival.'

"'But I cannot understand!'

"'Look in the glass, then!'

"I went to the glass and uttered a cry of surprise and horror at what I saw. All the right side of my moustache was burnt off.

"I made my escape as quickly as possible. Do you understand now why I never smoke cigars?"

"And is that all?" said I to the narrator.

"No. Six months after I met Genevieve again!"

"And we had an explanation, Monsieur," said a handsome and attractive lady opposite.

OSWALD K.

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The Deceiving of Mère Marchette.

I.

It was half-past eleven on a hot July day in Paris. The sunlight lay over the whole city, and shone nowhere more strongly than upon the great hospital of the Salpêtrière. Nobody was stirring unless forced to activity by some pressing duty. In the long white wards the patients were asleep or lying quiet in exhaustion under the burning fervour of the summer heat.

Down one of the corridors, where it seemed refreshingly cool after the warmth of the outer air from which he had come, a young man was passing. His step, though rapid, had the noiseless quality which bespeaks familiarity with the sick room and the hospital. His figure was compact and nervous, his glance clear and keen. Dr. Jean Lommel was one of the house physicians of the Salpêtrière, although that he was not now making his regular rounds was evident from the fact that entering a certain ward he passed quickly to a bed near the middle of it without stopping at any of the others.

On the bed lay an old woman. Her face was one which showed great strength of character. It was of a marked peasant type, and for all its innumerable wrinkles, its sunken temples, the coarse texture of its skin, and the shrunken lips which showed the lack of teeth behind them, it was full of a nobility and kindliness which no ravages of time or disease could wholly hide.

The hair that straggled in thin locks from beneath the white cap was hardly less snowy than the material which covered it; and when the patient opened her sunken eyes, as the doctor stopped beside the bed, they were bright and shining with a lustre which was not all either fever or anxiety. Her glance was one of intense and pitiful inquiry. The young man touched her white hair with the tips of his long fine fingers in a pitying caress, before he took hold of the withered wrist, shrunken and marked with blue veins, that lay outside the coverlet.

"In an hour, Mère Marchette," he said, answering her look—"in an hour he will be here; keep up a good heart. You do not suffer?"

The old woman feebly shook her head. The ghost of a smile, faint, but full of happiness, shone in her face. She did not speak, but she thanked him with a look before she closed her eyes, and lay as motionless as she had previously been.

The young man looked at her a moment, an expression of pity in his brown eyes; then with a sigh he turned away, and moved softly down the ward again. By the door he encountered one of the nurses, who had risen and come forward to speak to him.

"Will she live, M. Lommel?"

"Yes," the doctor answered. "She has given all her energies for days to keeping alive till her grandson gets here. It is very singular," he went on, in a voice of low distinctness that could have been acquired only in sick rooms, "how her instinct has taught her to save her strength. She never moves nor speaks; she simply lives."

"She has been that way," the nurse returned. "ever since we told her that Pierre was coming. Will he be here by twelve?"

"Not till half-past twelve," Dr. Lommel replied. "I will return before then."

And he went out into the hot sunshine.

II.

Everybody connected with the ward of Salpêtrière, wherein she was, held a kindly feeling for poor old Mère Marchette. The doctors and the nurses could not have been more kind or more tender had she been of their own blood. She was one of those who always win affection. She was so patient, so simple, so kindly.

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She was a peasant woman from Normandy, who had in her old age drifted to Paris with her grandson Pierre, a lad of sixteen years.

All the rest of the family were dead. Pierre's father had been a soldier, and it was with the hope of securing a pension for his son that Mère Marchette had left her home and the life in Normandy she loved, to throw herself into Paris as into the sea. The dead soldier, however, had been mustered out before the malarial fever, contracted in the swamps of the Landes, had developed itself, and the pension could not be obtained. The disappointment was a bitter one, made worse by the fact that Mère Marchette had been told by one and another that the claim would have been granted had the case been properly managed.

The poor old creature could not escape a feeling of self-blame in thinking that it was her want of keenness which had deprived Pierre of his pension. Her grandson for her represented the world, and to him she devoted all her energies. She toiled for him, and watched and suffered with that unselfish egotism possible only to the old and lonely.

Fortunately Pierre was a good lad, who returned his grandmother's love with a devotion hardly less complete than her own. They lived together in two attic rooms, where they passed the evenings sitting in the dark, and talking of their Normandy home. They recalled the past, and built endless air castles of the time when they should be able to return. They had grand plans of repurchasing the old cot where both of them had been born, and which had been lost by the foreclosure of a mortgage after the long illness of Pierre's father had ended.

They were never tired of talking of what they would do then, and of devising little ways in which the worn-out old farm might be made more profitable.

In the daytime Mère Marchette went out to do work as charwoman, while Pierre had been fortunate enough to obtain a place as assistant in a little grocery in Rue M. le Prince. It was in connection with this that Pierre gave his grandmother the only real grief he ever caused her while they were together. Suddenly the boy began to stay away in the evening, and when Mère Marchette sought to know the reason, he put her questions aside.

One evening, as she was making her way home, she saw her grandson chatting with a girl at the door of a milliner's shop. The heart of poor old Mère Marchette sank within her. The castles in the air, from whose glittering towers had shone delusive lights to strengthen and encourage her, fell in ruins before her eyes. In a moment the burden of her age, her poverty, her weariness, seemed increased tenfold.

She had all the peasant's instinctive distrust of Paris; she had not been able to live in the Latin Quarter without comprehending something of the evil about her, although, happily for her, the worst features of Parisian life would have been so unintelligible that she might have seen them unmoved. She thought no evil now of Pierre but she was seized with a terrible fear lest he might fall a victim to one of the sirens of the Latin Quarter, who, to Mère Marchette's thinking, destroyed soul and body alike.

Mère Marchette did not tell Pierre of the discovery she had made. She was only more gentle with him, while in secret she prayed more fervently. For some days longer the lad's mysterious absence continued, the sad hours of the evening stretching like long deserts of agony, over which the soul of Mère Marchette walked painfully with bleeding feet. And then one night Pierre came home with eyes aglow, and all was explained. He put into his grandmother's hand a little pile of francs—a sum pitiful enough in itself, but large to them—and told how a milliner in the street beyond had employed him in moving boxes and clearing out the attics of her house, which were to be remodelled into lodgings.

This had been his secret, and in his thought of the joyful surprise he was to give his grandmother, he had forgotten the pain she might endure by misunderstanding his absence.

It was such trifles as this that were the great events in the life of Mère Marchette and Pierre. There was a tenderness, an unselfishness, an idyllic devotion in their love which no amount of wealth, or culture, or rank could have heightened; but in the lad's veins was the blood of a soldier, that stirred hot with the currents of a vigorous youth. Of the army he had dreamed from his cradle, and strong as was his love for Mère Marchette, the force of destiny was stronger. It was the old tragedy of youth and age, of the absorption of maternal love and the restless impulses of the boy's heart.

Pierre justified his desire to himself with the excuse that he could earn more money in the ranks; but his grandmother knew only too well the force of the instinct he had inherited. She had seen the same struggle in the life of his father.

When Pierre was eighteen he shouldered his musket and marched away, leaving poor old Mère Marchette as much a stranger in Paris as when she had come to it two years before, to weep and pray alone. It would hardly be within the power of words to paint the anguish which lay between Pierre's departure and that hot July noon when Mère Marchette lay dying at the Salpêtrière.

Always in Paris she had been like a wild thing, caged and bewildered, confused by the life that swirled about her in the great city, even when she had been sustained by the presence of Pierre. When he was gone the gentle old soul began to die of home-sickness and heartbreak.

For two years she fought death stolidly, but persistently, refusing to acknowledge to herself that she was breaking down under the stress of loneliness and sorrow. She came of a race that died hard, and although she was past eighty, she looked forward hopefully to the time when Pierre should leave the army and come back to live with her again.

But the struggle for existence in Paris was hard, even when the joy of working for Pierre sustained her; when he was gone it became intolerable. At the end of two years the strength and courage even of the sturdy Norman peasant woman were exhausted; and then a dreadful disease, which had before shown itself in her family, seemed to take advantage of her weakness to spring upon her. She had been a charwoman in the family of Jean Lommel's mother, and so it came about that through the influence of the young doctor she had been admitted to the Salpêtrière when she was already dying of cancer in the stomach.

There was no patient in the ward who was not of better birth than Mère Marchette. She was of all most deficient in education, in knowledge of the world, in the graces of life; and yet of them all it was only the poor old peasant woman who awakened in the minds of the attendants a glow of genuine affection. There are some people who are born to be loved, and when these rare beings remain worthy of it, neither age, nor poverty,

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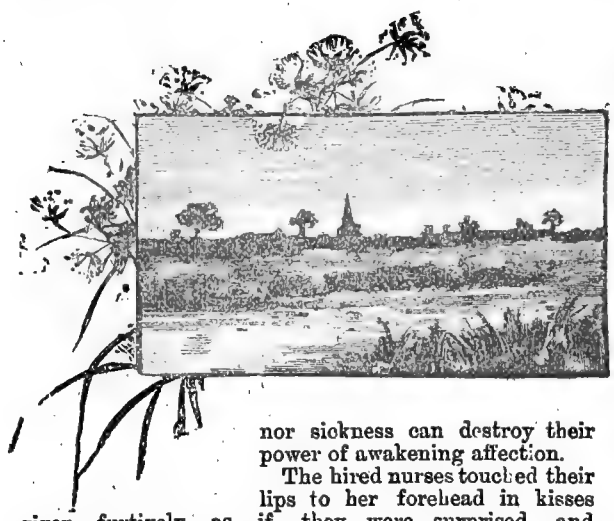

nor sickness can destroy their power of awakening affection.

The hired nurses touched their lips to her forehead in kisses given furtively, as if they were surprised, and prepared to be ashamed, of the emotion which called from them this unwonted display. The doctors spoke to her in tones unprofessionally soft, while Dr. Lommel, who had charge of the ward, treated her with an affectionate courtesy scarcely less warm than that he would have shown to his own grandmother.

They all knew that Mère Marchette must die, and from counting the time in weeks they had dropped to days, and then to hours. Indeed it seemed only the old woman's will which kept her alive now until Pierre should come. She had borne all her sufferings without a murmur, but she had not been able wholly to repress the cry of her heart.

The young soldier's regiment was in Algiers, and there had been difficulties about his furlough. Had it been any other death-bed in the hospital to which he had been summoned these difficulties would hardly have been surmounted, but in behalf of Mère Marchette the physicians had worked so zealously that all obstacles were removed and Pierre's leave of absence granted. From the moment she had been told that her grandson was on his way she had been perfectly quiet, and, as the doctor said, had devoted her whole body to keeping alive untill Pierre should come.

And on this hot July noon the train which was bringing Pierre was drawing nearer to Paris, and Mère Marchette lay so still that she seemed scarcely to breathe—so still that one might fancy she would not even think, lest in so doing she exhausted some precious grain of strength, and so should die without the blessing of that last embrace.

III.

Whoever keeps himself informed of the course of modern scientific investigations is likely to be aware that especial attention has been given at the Salpêtrière to that strange physical or psychical fact known as hypnotism.

To the outside observer no feature of this strange power is more remarkable than the influence the hypnotist may exert over his subject after the trance is broken. A hypnotised person may be told to perform any act on awaking, and when seemingly restored to his normal condition bears the impress of that command so strongly that he is urged to obey it by an irresistible impulse. It is quite as easy, moreover, to foist upon the patients the most extraordinary delusions. The subject is told that upon awaking a bottle will seem to be a lamp, a blank card a picture, or any other deception which comes into the mind of the hypnotist; and so perfect is the working of this mysterious and terrible law that the delusion is accomplished to its minutest details.

Dr. Lommel, like all his young *confrères*, had become intensely interested in all these researches, so like a scientific realisation of the fairy tales of the Orient. He had even tried some experiments on his own account; and when the sufferings of Mère Marchette became pitifully intense he had ventured to attempt the substitution of hypnotism for opiates in relieving her distress. The old woman had not easily yielded to this influence. Susceptibility to hypnotism is more apt to be found in hysterical or nervously sensitive subjects than in such sturdy characters. By degrees, however, Dr. Lommel established control over her.

In the end, to throw her into a hypnotic sleep, he had only to hold his forefinger an inch or two from her forehead, so that her eyes, in looking at it, turned upward and inward a little. He did not experiment with Mère Marchette; he felt too tenderly toward the old woman to make her the subject of scientific investigation outside of the direct line of treatment.

He simply said: "When you awaken you will be free from pain, Mère Marchette;" then he would breathe lightly on her forehead, and the sick woman would awaken, to lie as peaceful as if no terrible disease was gnawing like a tiger at her vitals.

The case had attracted a good deal of attention at the Salpêtrière, and, although Mère Marchette was utterly ignorant of it, her sick-bed was a point of interest toward which were turned the thoughts of physicians over half of Europe. The unlearned peasant, to whom the simplest terms of science would have been unintelligible, was furnishing data for future scientific treatises; and people of whose very existence she was unaware read the daily bulletins of her condition with closest eagerness.

IV.

It was a few minutes after twelve o'clock when Dr. Lommel re-entered the ward. Mère Marchette lay apparently sleeping, but as he approached her bedside the old eyes opened with a piercing and eager question. The young man shook his head, smiling tenderly.

"Not yet, Mère Marchette," he said. "There are still some minutes to wait."

He sat down beside the bed, and laid his fingers on her wrist. The pulse was so faint that he could scarcely feel it, but it was steady. For some minutes he remained quiet, with his eyes fixed on the poor old face before him. There came into his mind the thought of what this woman's life had been—her childhood and youth in the hut of a Norman peasant; of what her own home might have been when she became a wife and mother; of the desolation which had come upon her in the death of all her family save only Pierre; of the strange fate that had brought her to Paris; of the terrible wrench which her old heart must have felt when her grandson was taken from her; and of the pathetic patience with which she had borne privation, loneliness, and suffering.

He knew only the outlines of her history, since Mère Marchette had spoken little of herself. What her feelings might have been he could only imagine; the old

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woman could not have told her mental experiences; she had never even analysed them. Unless he had been a peasant and a mother himself, Lommel could not have divined Mère Marchette's emotions; he could only reflect what he should have felt in her place. He said to himself at last that, after all, the circumstances which made Mère Marchette's lot so pathetic must also have deadened her sensibilities, and so have softened her suffering.

He sighed and looked at his watch. His assistant had gone to the railway station to meet Pierre, and the time he had fixed for their return was already past by five minutes. He felt again his patient's pulse, with a terrible dread lest after all the young soldier should arrive too late. The artery throbbed more feebly, but still steadily, and at his touch the sick woman opened her eyes with the old questioning look.

"Patience, Mère Marchette," he said, nodding encouragingly, "all goes well."

She did not speak, but she gave him a look so eloquent with gratitude that words were not needed. Then she lay quiet again, and the silent watch went on. Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen; the young doctor became extremely uneasy. At last in the distance he heard a clock strike one. At the sound Mère Marchette opened her eyes with a quick, startled glance.

"Pierre!" she cried, in a voice of intense love and terror.

"Victor has gone to the station to meet him; patience yet a little."

The old woman regarded him with a look of terrible pathos.

"God could not let me die without seeing Pierre," she murmured.

At that moment through the still afternoon was heard the sound of a carriage. Mère Marchette's eyes shone with a wild and fevered express on.

"You must be calm," Lommel said, "I will bring him to you."

He administered the little stimulant she could take, and passed quickly out into the corridor.

V.

Dr. Lommel closed the door of the ward behind him and started down the corridor, but at the first step he stopped suddenly with a terrible sinking of the heart. Victor was coming toward him, but alone, and with a white face.

"Victor," Jean cried, in a voice intense but low, "what has happened? Where is Pierre?"

"There has been an accident," Victor returned. "A bridge broke under his train."

"But you do not know—" began Lommel.

"Yes," the other interrupted; "M. de Brue, who was on the train and escaped with a broken arm, was in the same compartment with Pierre. He rode through on the engine that came in for help. Pierre had told him I was to meet him, and so when M. de Brue saw me he stopped to say that the soldier was struck on the chest and killed instantly."

Dr. Lommel stood regarding his companion with terror and compassion in his look.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" he said; "poor Mère Marchette!"

"It will kill her," Victor responded.

"That is nothing," was the doctor's reply. "It is not death, but the agony she will suffer."

At that moment the nurse came out of the ward and hurried down the corridor to join them.

"M. le Docteur," she said, "I beg your pardon, but the excitement of Mére Marchette is so great that I venture to suggest that her grandson hurry."

She glanced round as she spoke, and saw that he was not there. An exclamation rose to her lips; the doctor checked her by a glance.

"Go back to Mère Marchette," said he, "and say that I am cautioning Pierre——stay, I will go myself. Wait here, Victor."

He went back into the ward, and passed down between the cots, from which eyes, that the indifference of illness scarcely left human, watched him with faint curiosity. Mère Marchette was sitting up in bed, trembling with eagerness and excitement. All the reserve which she had maintained for weeks had been swept aside. The moment for which she had kept herself alive had come at last, and there was no longer any need to save her energy. Her eyes shone, a feverish glow was on her cheek, even her withered lips had taken on for the moment a wan and ghostly red. It seemed to the doctor, as he looked at her, as if all the vitality which remained in her feeble frame was being expended in a last quick fire.

"Ah," he said, "I have been warning Pierre to be calm, when it is you to whom I should speak. Come, it will only take a moment, but I must give you treatment before I can let you see him."

As he spoke he put his forefinger up to her forehead with a gesture he always used in hypnotising her. Mère Marchette struggled a moment as if she would not yield to anything which delayed her reunion with Pierre; then she sank into a hypnotic sleep. The doctor leant forward, and spoke with an emphasis which he had never before used with his patient.

"When you awake," he said, "you will see Pierre; the person I shall bring to you is your grandson. Remember," he repeated, "it is Pierre who will come in with me."

He breathed on her eyelids in the usual method of awakening her.

"Now," he said, "I will bring him here, Mère Marchette."

He went back to where Victor and the nurse were awaiting him.

"Victor," he said quickly, "you know the experiment

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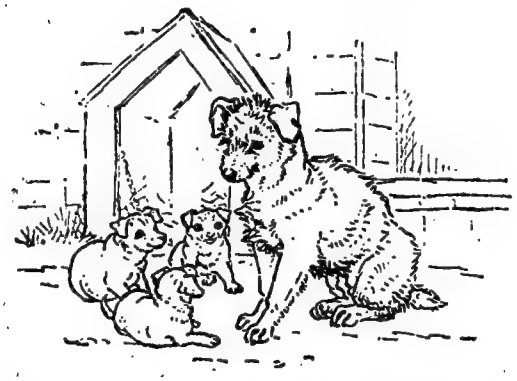

M. Charcot tried yesterday when he made a hypnotised patient believe one person was another: I have told Mère Marchette that you are Pierre. You must take his place; come quickly."

The young man drew back.

"I cannot," he protested.

"You must," Lommel returned, almost fiercely. "Come."

VI.

It was with terrible inward misgiving that Jean and Victor entered the ward; but as soon as the eyes of Mère Marchette fell upon the latter, they knew that the experiment was a success. Such a look of yearning love illumined the withered, old features, such an unspeakable joy shone in the sunken eyes, such quivering eagerness was expressed by the outstretched hands, that the young men found their way to the bedside blinded by tears.

An inarticulate cry, that was half moan and half sob, burst from the lips of Mère Marchette as Victor fell on his knees by the bedside. Carried out of himself by genuine feeling, the young man had no need to simulate the emotions necessary for the part he was playing. Seizing the wrinkled hand which lay before him on the bed, he covered it with tears and kisses; then with a cry of piercing sweetness, Mère Marchette flung herself forward into his arms.

"Oh, Pierre, Pierre!" she sobbed. "Oh, the good God, the good God!"

She clasped her arms about his neck, she strained him to her breast, the feebleness of her dying embrace transformed to strength by the divine fervour of maternal love. She mingled her kisses with a soft and hardly articulate babble of endearing words; the terms which she had used over his cradle she mingled with the pet names of his childhood, and the loving speech which belonged to maturer years. She held him away from her that she might look at him, and her eyes were holden so that she saw in his face the changes that her fancy had pictured in thinking of the real Pierre.

"Ah," she said, "how brown thou hast grown; and thou art such a man now! Ah, thou rogue," she went on, laughing softly, "I knew thou hadst grown a beard—and not a word of it in thy letters. But I knew."

She put her thin fingers under his chin, and with a sudden gravity lifted his face.

"Look in my eyes," she said; "why dost thou turn away? Hast thou not been a good boy? Hast thou not loved the good God?"

Poor Victor, overwhelmed with the dreadful consciousness of deceit, found it almost impossible, in face of this touching and pious affection, to meet the old woman's glance. He struggled to force himself to look into her eyes unwaveringly. Dr. Lommel laid his hand upon his companion's shoulder.

"Yes, Mère Marchette," said he, "Pierre is a good lad, that I will answer for."

The old woman raised her eyes towards Heaven, and her lips moved. She was evidently praying. She had received extreme unction just before noon, but this moment in which she commended her grandson to God was to her no less solemn than that of her own last communion. Then she put out her hand to Dr. Lommel with her smile of wonderful sweetness and an air of noble simplicity.

"You have been so kind to old Mère Marchette," were her words; "the good God will reward you."

He looked at the old dying peasant woman and tried to speak, but his sobs choked him. He bent and kissed her hand, and laid it gently in that of Victor. Her little strength was evidently failing fast. With a last effort she made a movement to drag herself nearer to Victor. He understood her wish and supported her in his arms.

"Promise me," she murmured, her voice wasted almost to a whisper, "that thou wilt be good."

"I promise," he answered.

And the words were no less sincere because she mistook the speaker. A smile of heavenly rapture came over her face; she tried to speak and failed. But Victor understood her wish and kissed her. As their lips parted she sighed quiveringly.

"She is dead," said Dr. Lommel.

VII.

Victor laid the body gently back upon the bed, and rose to his feet. He seized his friend by the shoulders; the tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"Oh, *mon Dieu*, Jean!" he cried. "To deceive such trust. I feel as if I have been violating a sacrament."

"I know," the other answered; "but ah, how happy she was!"

M. A. P.

OUGHT YOU TO HAVE HAD ONE OF THOSE FIVE POUNDS?

The result of the distribution in connection with the ten £5 notes offered every week in *P.W.* appears in the current issue of that paper. Two out of the ten people selected have been fortunate enough to secure £5 each by forwarding their names to this office. There are eight others, who, by failing to apply, either through indifference, or through their not being readers, did not secure their money. Their names and addresses are also given. Are you one of them?

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The Lustre Lasts!

Pyn-Ka Leaves no Scratches!

Cleans and burnishes gold, silver, plate, copper, brass, nickel, tin, glass, etc., better, quicker, and at less cost of labour and money than any other polish known.

Paste or tablets, 1d. to 6d. All dealers.

NOSE MACHINE.

This is a contrivance by which the short cartilage of the nose is pressed into shape by wearing the instrument an hour daily for a short time. Price 10/6, sent free for stamps.

ALEX. ROSS,
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Opposite Bedford Row. (Est. 1850.)
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FOR ALL

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Do not be persuaded to take a substitute, there is nothing as good as ZOX.

Of all Chemists, 1s. and 2s. 6d. per Box.

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THE BEST HAIR DYE

in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 10s. 6d.

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WHY INDUCE HEART DISEASE TO CURE YOUR HEAD

When you can get a real safe remedy like KAPUTINE?

Dr. Thurston, Licentiate, of the Royal College of Physicians, writes November 16th: "Knowing the formulæ from which KAPUTINE is compounded, I unhesitatingly recommend its use in preference to crude Antifibrin and other synthetic drugs which, unfortunately for sufferers, are so commonly used for Headache, and which have undoubtedly injurious effects on the Heart, Brain, and Vesicle tissues generally."

NOTHING LIKE KAPUTINE. NOTHING SIMILAR. NOTHING AS GOOD.

All leading Chemists sell it. Packets of 18 doses 1s. Sample 1d.

After 13 Years' Suffering, Cured for 1s.

The Rev. T. Taylor, Vicar of St. Bredward, Cornwall, writes: "Owing to a severe accident while riding, my wife has for the past thirteen years been subject to violent attacks of neuralgia. The relief she has experienced from KAPUTINE has been speedy and effectual. KAPUTINE, while it is efficacious in its use, is attended with none of the disagreeable after effects which she has experienced in the case of other drugs."

After 10 Weeks' Suffering, Cured for 1d.

From Rev. J. H. Burn. Deer Rectory, Mintlaw, Aberdeen, November 8th, 1897.

"My own cure with one dose of KAPUTINE was marvellous after ten weeks incessant neuralgia.

Used also by Her Grace the Countess of Cavan, Lady Dashwood, The Countess of Munster, Surgeon Lieut.-Col. Baker, etc., etc.

Nothing Similar. Nothing as Good. KAPUTINE CURES HEADACHE IN 10 MINUTES.

If you enclose stamped envelope to A. M. Kaputine Ltd., Huddersfield, you will get free samples by return.

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AIDS TO ACCURACY.

F. T.—Yes, it is a fact that the number of brewing licenses taken out has fallen off very much lately. During the last twelve years there has been a decrease of 10,568.

A. T. has a penny in his possession bearing on it the letter H. He wants to know the meaning thereof.———— No doubt it is one of those made by Messrs. Ralph Heaton and Sons, the proprietors of the Birmingham mint. This firm was founded by the man who invented the hot shot used at the siege of Gibraltar, and so saved the fortress.

G. H.—Every President of the United States has been either a lawyer or a soldier, or both.

HOUSEHOLDER.—If a yard-dog is to be depended upon as a reliable protector of the house to which he is attached, it stands to reason that the better his state of health the more efficient he will be. A dog that is surfeited with indigestible and inappropriate food is no more to be expected to be alert by night and day than is one that is suffering from the pangs of rheumatism. On the other hand, a hungry dog is far more likely to accept without demur the poisonous bait offered to him by strangers who desire to silence his bark for felonious purposes of their own.

SCOTTY.—It takes fifty tons of paint to give the Forth Bridge one coat of paint, the area dealt with being something like 120 acres.

WAITRESS.—The waitresses on the terrace of the House of Commons are not engaged by session, or even by the week, but from day to day, and the number engaged depends upon the state of the weather.

B. B.—The great puff-ball increases its size more rapidly than any other form of vegetation. It frequently springs from a tiny bud to the size of a full-bodied pumpkin in the course of a night, and calculations have proved that it increases at the rate of sixty million cells a minute.

T. H.—The first printed books had their leaves printed on one side only, the blank sides being pasted together.

ECONOMIST.—One of the cheapest British towns to live in is Bristol; another Birmingham. The cheapest of all, however, is Liverpool. During the past few years rents have dropped 25 per cent. in some parts of the city, and, taken all round, meat and provisions are abnormally cheap.

D. B.—The reading of romances is forbidden by the Koran; that is the reason popular romances are never put in writing among the Mohammedans, but are passed from one story-teller to another.

SCANTY LOCKS is anxious to know if continual cutting or trimming of the hair will make it more abundant ————Frequent cutting of the hairs cannot increase their number, although it will increase their thickness.

C. J. H.—The "Stayabed" Club, of Chicago, is not a club of lazy people, but an organisation composed of the bedridden. The qualifications for membership are confirmed invalidism, and the ability to communicate with the other members by letter. The idea of this pathetic organisation occurred to a lady who had been bedridden for fifteen years.

P. P.—You are probably thinking of the law which obtains in Italy, where, if a circus does not perform every act promised in the printed programme, or, if it misleads the public by means of pictures, it is liable to a fine of £100 for each offence.

HAIR.—Wire hairpins were first made in England in 1545. Prior to that time, the ladies used fine wooden skewers to "keep their hair on."

R. G.—The case I heard of the other day seems to me to be a still harder one than that to which you refer. In China, recently, a man was executed for murdering his father, and along with him his schoolmaster for not having taught him better.

MODISTE.—The idea is not new. One or two of the great fashion firms in Paris have had figures modelled in wax in order to show off their costumes to advantage. Madame Patti is one whose presentment in wax may be seen clad in the very robes which that illustrious lady has ordered, and will wear. Sarah Bernhardt is another.

I. S. wants to know how many separate railway companies there are in the United States.————There are no fewer than 1,785 such companies in that part of the world.

S. K.—According to a telephone authority, the easiest language for telephoning is Chinese. It is principally monosyllables, and is made up of simple rising and falling inflections. German, it seems, is a good language for telephoning; but French is bad, and English worse, being too sibilant.

L. O. H.—Take an apple and make a stitch in the side just under the skin, drawing the thread carefully through; then place the point of the needle into the hole from which it has just come and take another stitch, continuing this until the circle is completed, only make a point of bringing the thread in the last instance through the hole made by the first insertion of the needle. Cross the ends of the thread, and pull gently, and the apple will come in half, although the skin will be whole.

W. T. F.—About 137,000,000 blank cartridges are used every year in the German Army.

INK SPOT.—Yes; some ancient inkstands have been found in tombs at Thebes, in Upper Egypt. One, which resembles a wooden palette, and is said to date back to about 1500 B.C., has two compartments; the upper has two holes, for red and black ink respectively, and the lower contains three reed pens. Some of the dry ink remains in the holes after a lapse of 3,000 years.

E. O.—Runaway horses are unknown in Russia. No one drives there without having a thin cord with a running noose round the neck of the animal. When an animal bolts, the cord is pulled, and the horse stops as soon as it feels the pressure on the windpipe.

M. P.—In Germany, a merchant was recently fined heavily for using a quotation from the Bible at the head of an advertisement, and although such exceedingly bad taste might not meet with the same punishment in this country, it would displease the public so highly that the advertiser would do himself more harm than good. I shouldn't advise you to do it.

M. H.—Certainly it is better to keep books on low shelves rather than high ones—at any rate, those which you particularly value. The nearer one goes to the ceiling the greater the heat of the atmosphere, and heat is injurious to valuable bindings. It dries out the oil of the leather, and causes the covers to warp. Books require good air just as much as human beings.

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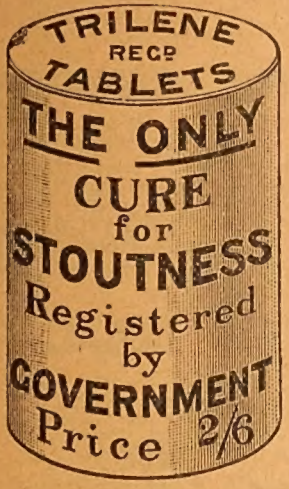
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

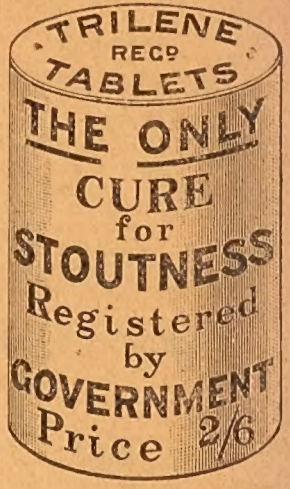
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

"Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

Miss S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

25 Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

Miss M FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2st., and am much better in health."

Mrs. F. HARPER, 61 Portland Crescent, Leeds, writes: "My doctor persuaded me to try a box, and I find they have done my breathing a lot of good and I can get about much better. My doctor did not wish his name mentioned, but they have done him good personally."

A. BROWN, of 25 Edwin Street, High Pallion, Sunderland, says: "You have no idea what a most wonderful effect the Tablets had. I am a great deal thinner, and better in health."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

Mr. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 13st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity.

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began your Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary."

L. LUDDRINGTON, "Sunnyside," Station Road, Sidcup, says: "I have benefited greatly, and have lost a stone."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PEATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Miss A. ATKINS, 329 Southdown Road, Liverpool, writes: "I lost nearly a stone from taking one box."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

Mrs. JAMES SMITH, of Cowell Terrace, Soham, says: "Your 2s. 6d. box of Tablets reduced my weight 12lb."

Mrs. WOODS, 447 Cowbridge Road, Canton, Cardiff, says: "Tablets have a most marked effect, and I shall take every opportunity to make known the wonders of your remedy."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

"Miss HUMPHREYS, of Claremont Buildings, Shrewsbury, has lost 1st. in weight already, and thinks the Tablets deserve every success."

Mrs. O'CONNOR, 2 Kensington Square Mansions, London, writes: "I am much less stout for taking them."

Surgeon Colonel E. S. BRANDER writes from Ihansi, India, in September, 1897: "Your Tablets in my own experience form an excellent remedy for reducing weight."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Miss J. GUISE, 3 North End, Croydon, says: "I cannot speak too highly of the Tablets; I was stout all my life until a few weeks ago, when I first began your treatment. I was surprised to find they acted so admirably. I am now getting quite a slender figure, besides being better in health."

Balgowan Lodge, Methven, N.B.

Miss MCPHERSON writes: "I have taken a box, and am reduced 1st. in weight."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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"The Firm are Thoroughly Straightforward in their Dealings." *CYCLING* (Answers to Correspondents. Aug. 6, 1898).

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BICYCLE PRIZES.

Ladies' or Gent's £23 A.B. Cycles.

SEND ANSWERS EARLY.

WHAT TO DO.—Make up the best sentence you can of eleven words, the first letter of each word commencing with a letter of "COMPETITION" in proper order. Thus: "*C*yclists *O*ne *M*ay *P*ass *E*verywhere *T*hat *I*nvariably *T*rust *I*n *O*ur *N*ame." It will be seen that the initial letters of each word spell "COMPETITION." The foregoing sentence is only given as an example of what we mean, and should not be sent in.

AN ABSOLUTELY FREE COMPETITION.

We ask you to buy nothing before allowing you to participate in the Prizes. Neither after you have won a prize (if you are fortunate enough to do so) do we compel you to purchase any accessories. You pay nothing to enter, and even if you receive one of our regret notices—and we make no secret of the fact that hundreds are unsuccessful—you are only out of pocket for the cost of two penny stamps, which the Post Office gets the benefit of. Thus we can truthfully assert of this thoroughly genuine Competition that it is

ABSOLUTELY FREE TO ALL.

ALL MACHINES GUARANTEED FOR TWELVE MONTHS.

LIST OF PRIZES.

First Prize, £23 A.B. Safety, fitted with A.B. tyres.

The following ladies and gentlemen are amongst the number of persons who have recently received free bicycles, each of whom have signed a Solemn Declaration that he or she is in no way connected either directly or indirectly with this firm. We will forfeit £1,000 if this statement is incorrect. A few Free Cycle Winners: Mr. Geo. A. Haynes, 9 Windsor Street, Barrow-in-Furness; Miss Mary Page-Henderson, 8 Lexham Gardens, Kensington, W.; Mr. A. Merrilees, Harvay, Orkney; Mr. Arthur J. Woolnough, 29 Thomson Street, Govan, Glasgow; Mrs. Maria Fraser, Haglefort, Shinrone, Ireland; Mr. Robert Hughes, Llanidan, Anglesey, North Wales; Mr. L. Horne, 101 London Road, Oldham; Mrs. Flora H. Bungay, 170 Railton Road, Herne Hill, S.E.; etc., etc., etc.

Second Class (9 prizes) £23 Cycle for £9
Third Class (12 prizes) £23 Cycle for £10
Fourth Class (15 prizes) £23 Cycle for £11
Fifth Class (18 prizes) £23 Cycle for £12
Sixth Class (20 prizes) £23 Cycle for £13
Consolation (25 prizes) £23 Cycle for £14

TAKE PARTICULAR NOTICE.—COMPETITION IS NOW OPEN and **closes September 19th, 1898,** but do not delay sending in at once. Results will be declared as soon as possible, although it may be a fortnight afterwards before all replies are posted.

Winners of prizes must clear them within a week or ten days, otherwise machines unclaimed will be passed on to the next in rotation. Prizes may be considerably increased in all or any one class. Unless stamp is enclosed for postage of Catalogue and Result of Competition, the Company will not guarantee to inform competitors of their success. Prize-winners need not purchase any accessories with their machines, unless they so desire. As the majority of the competitors may not be able to call and inspect the machines, **we guarantee to refund the full amount** paid for a Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, or for a Consolation Prize **if the owner is not perfectly satisfied** with it on arrival. We cannot give any money or other prizes in lieu of cycles, and consequently cannot enter into any discussion relating thereto. One solution only allowed to each competitor. Disregard of this regulation renders any prize liable to forfeiture.

£100

We offer this Reward to any lady or gentleman able to prove that we have ever in the whole course of our existence sold our cheapest machines under £15 cash either to any ordinary customer, agent, dealer or shipper. We do not allow a shilling extra discount beyond the 34 per cent. off the catalogue price to anyone, and even if we had an order for one hundred of our lowest priced machines we should refuse to supply them unless we were paid £1,500.

Mark letters "SHORT STORIES" on top corner of envelope, and address to the Managing Director,

A.B. CYCLE CO. LTD., 59 & 60 CHANCERY LANE, HOLBORN, W.C.

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